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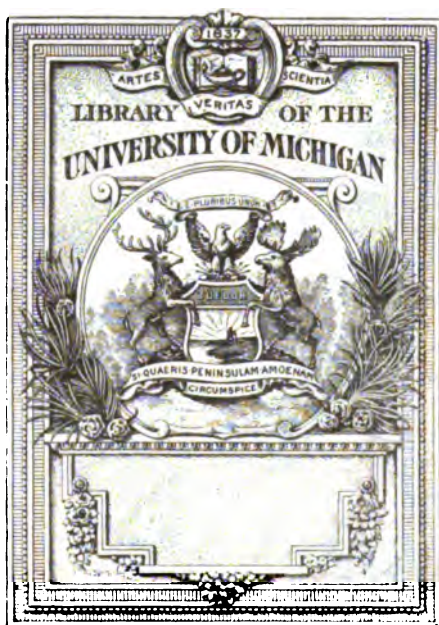
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BELGRAVIA

A London Magazine.

VOL. LXXXI.

MAY to AUGUST, 1893.



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BELGRAVIA

MAY, 1893.

Found Wanting.*

By MRS. ALEXANDER.

Author of "THE WOOING O'T," "A WOMAN'S HEART," "BLIND FATE,"
"FOR HIS SAKE," etc., etc.

CHAPTER X.

"MAN PROPOSES."

JUNE was now upon them. The "Grand Prix" was over, and fashionable Paris began to disperse. The Conroys, after a brief stay in London, had gone on to Audeley Chase, whence Frances wrote regularly though not very frequently. She had found her school sadly disorganised, and most of the scholars in arms against the clumsy mediæval dress which their patroness wished to impose upon them. Mr. Riddell was beginning to feel a slight degree of low fever, which usually showed itself at this season of the year, and obliged him, most reluctantly, to seek refreshment at the sea-side at Dieppe or Havre, for he really hated to leave his dear girl behind, but then his duty to *her* demanded that he should preserve his health and strength.

"I am the last of my race," he would say, as if he belonged to a historical family, "and if I were taken she would be unprotected in this rough world."

Meantime the dear girl turned and mended and darned, aided by Léontine, till her father's wardrobe was in a state of complete repair.

During this time Ogilvie honoured Mr. Riddell with various visits, not unfrequently asking his advice respecting the value of

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sundry objects of art, antique trifles, and such like *bibelots*, marks of esteem that confirmed that gentleman's already high estimate of himself, until he grew quite patronising to his new friend.

To May it seemed delightfully natural to see Mr. Ogilvie come in and out in an easy, unconventional way. His gifts of flowers, and frequent loan of books, brought wonderful enjoyment and variety into her life, with which he gradually and imperceptibly entwined himself. It was a quietly pleasant time. Ogilvie occasionally sent admissions to the Théâtre Français or the Opera Comique, to Riddell and his daughter, where he almost always joined them, and discussed the play or the music between the acts, with May, who had grown so accustomed to him that she had ceased to feel his overpowering superiority and talked freely enough in his presence. Intellectually, this intercourse was extremely beneficial to a half-educated girl, the ultimate good perhaps was problematical.

It was the last Sunday in the month, and the following Wednesday Mr. Riddell had arranged to leave home for ten days or a fortnight, and had gone out in the afternoon to leave his card at one or two houses, when Ogilvie rang at the entrance of the entresol. (He had for some time ceased to ask the concierge for Mr. Riddell.) The door was opened by May, in a very pretty out-door costume, a silver-grey *barége*, and a large black ace hat, with soft feathers, a couple of deep red carnations coquettishly fastened under the brim and over the right ear.

"My father is out," she said, as soon as they had exchanged greetings.

"And his daughter is *going* out," said Ogilvie smiling. "I must not detain you," but he crossed the threshold as he spoke.

"Oh! I am not obliged to go out immediately. I am going up to Madame Falk, and then to take Mademoiselle Perret to the Bois."

"Mademoiselle Perret?" repeated Ogilvie, motioning May with a polite wave of the hand towards the little *salon*, the door of which stood open. She mechanically returned to it. "She is your musical friend is she not—in the Rue C——?"

"Yes, she always enjoys a walk in the Bois on Sunday, and I do not care to sit here alone."

"Or with Léontine for company?"

"Léontine is out too."

Ogilvie looked at her keenly for a moment, and then averted his eyes.

"So you are all alone? You arrange your flowers admirably," looking round the pretty room.

"Your flowers, Mr. Ogilvie!" exclaimed May, with a sweet, smiling, upward look, while a wave of delicate colour passed over her cheek. "You are so very thoughtful in sending them. I seem quite rich when I am putting them in their places. Last year I had but a beggarly account of empty bowls and vases."

"Last year!" said Ogilvie, dreamily. "I did not know you last year. The world would seem quite strange now without you and your father," he added after a moment's pause.

"Yes, it certainly would seem very strange to me," she returned frankly. "I little thought, when I first met you, we should ever be such friends."

"And friendship is such a charming tie, strong and calm," added Ogilvie. "I am looking forward with some dismay to a compulsory visit to England next week. I think, do you know, I am half-afraid my valuable services may be transferred from Paris to London."

"What! Must you leave Paris?" cried May in undisguised apprehension.

"It may be so," he returned, with a lingering, searching glance. "Yet I imagine it is possible your father might be induced to undertake some literary work there."

"I do not think anything will take him away from Paris," said May, shaking her head.

There was a pause.

"Mr. Riddell leaves town on Wednesday," resumed Ogilvie, "but he tells me that your friends upstairs will look after you."

"Yes—that is, they would; but Madame Falk thinks of going away to-morrow to some place in Normandy, and as Miss Barton goes with her, I do not think they will be back for ten days at least."

"Then you will be *quite* alone?"

"Mademoiselle Perret will be here, at least I think so. I have said nothing to my father or Madame Falk about their movements, it would only put them out; each would want to stay with me."

Ogilvie seemed to think for a minute.

"Do you never go to the sea-side with Mr. Riddell?"

"Never," she returned shortly.

"Your toilette is very becoming to-day," was his next remark. "I ought to apologize for so personal an observation, but friends really interested in each other may indulge in a certain degree of freedom."

"Oh, yes! certainly, so long as it is a note of admiration," returned May, smiling.

"Would you not permit me to find fault, then?"

"Certainly I should, if you were quite good-natured and sincere about it."

"I believe I should be both, unless——" He stopped.

"Unless what, Mr. Ogilvie?" asked May earnestly.

"I shall tell you later! What a beautiful day, or rather evening! Suppose you throw Mademoiselle over, and come for a drive to St. Cloud with me. It would be charming in the woods there."

"Yes. I am sure it would be, but my father is coming and I must not be out, besides—I cannot disappoint Mademoiselle Perret, she has so little pleasure."

"Then you consider it a pleasure to walk with you?"

"For Mademoiselle Perret, yes!" replied May laughing.

"So do I," put in Ogilvie in a low voice.

"And now, Mr. Ogilvie," she continued, "I must pay my visit to Madame Falk or I shall be late for my appointment."

"Very well. May I accompany you, 'chez Madame'?"

"Yes, pray come. She will be very pleased to see you."

She rose, and they left the apartment, May putting the key in her pocket.

Madame Falk's Sundays were always well attended. She was a very popular person—artists, male and female, of various nationalities, were at home there; so were more solid bourgeois, and shrewd, though struggling lawyers; she had a pleasant word for each. Journalists, of high and low degree, abounded; and many a stray English governess, adrift on the surface of Parisian life, found comfort and encouragement at her fireside in winter; rest and refreshing shade behind her "jalousies" in summer. To-day there were only a couple of American ladies, fresh from Yankee-land, and Madame Falk's Cockney nephew.

"My father is out, so I brought Mr. Ogilvie to see you, Madame Falk," said May.

"Quite right, my dear," in a tone of approbation. "Very glad to see you, Mr. Ogilvie. Let me present you to Miss Melinda P. Gatcombe of the 'Waxahatchie Eagle' and Mrs. Laurence Scully of the 'Columbian Star.' These ladies are deeply interested in social matters, on which they are commissioned to report to their respective journals. Mr. Ogilvie is in the English diplomatic service, and behind the scenes in most political matters."

Having made this terrible avowal Madame Falk left her unfortunate guest in the hands of the tormentors, who immediately fell upon and rent him.

Miss Melinda was a tall, thin, and exceedingly nasal spinster with a puckered, pallid face, while Mrs. L. Scully was a smiling, arch-eyed, golden-haired widow, accustomed evidently to abject submission on the part of the stronger sex.

May bestowed her attention on the Cockney nephew whose three months' experience in Paris had not yet enabled him to throw off his insular *mauvais honte*. She was accustomed to meet him every Sunday, at least, at his aunt's, and it was immense joy and relief to him, whenever he had a chance of speaking to her alone. He was soon in full flow of conversation, confiding to her, in a low tone and with rapid utterance, the beastly way that fellow, the head clerk, behaved to him at the office.

Madame Falk was looking very handsome in a resèda grenadine and black lace, while Miss Barton in stiff black silk, her head bristling all over with steely-grey curls, had on her best company manners, and sat on an uncompromising chair nursing Madame Falk's pet cat Ivan, a great furry beauty, a present from Madame Zavadoskoï. To these enter Carr, who was very cordially received, especially by Miss Barton.

He only bowed to May, not attempting to disturb her conversation with the young Englishman, and merely nodding to Ogilvie.

"I did not think you were still in Paris, Mr. Carr," said Madame Falk, giving him a cup of tea.

"I am rather surprised at finding myself here still," he replied. "But some Australian friends have turned up, and I have done

more sight-seeing in a week than I managed in the three months I have been dawdling here before. However, I start to-morrow for Switzerland and the Italian Lakes, so I looked in to say good-bye, hardly hoping to find you, Madame Falk."

"Well, we are off to-morrow for a month," observed Miss Barton, "at least *I* shall be a month away, but my cousin runs to and fro to Paris, to pick up subjects and post her letters. And this dear creature must do the best he can without us," stroking the cat. "However May—Miss Riddell—will look after him, he is nearly as much at home in the *entresol* as here." Carr, as in duty bound, admired the favourite, who accepted his advances in a dignified way.

"Madame Zavadoskoï and everyone except yourselves have disappeared," resumed Carr, "and you'll be gone to-morrow."

They talked a little longer of their friends' various destinations.

Then the fair American journalists, finding it was impossible to extract anything from the wary diplomate, rose and took leave; as soon as they were gone, May followed their example. "I will come up as soon as I return," she said, "and take your last instructions. When do you start—to-morrow?"

"At ten: an unearthly hour!" returned Madame Falk. "I can do almost anything but get up early!"

"Ten is not so very early."

"Too early for me. It means getting up at seven. Where are you going, May?"

"To the Rue C—"

"May I come with you?" asked the nephew.

"Yes, certainly," and Carr fancied there was a tone, not exactly of pleasure, in her voice. Ogilvie, who had stood up, made a step forward, then paused and began to caress the cat and make enquiries as to his pedigree and history.

When May left the room, followed by her radiant cavalier, Ogilvie bade his hostess good-day with some flattering words expressive of his hope of meeting her again, and bowed himself out. Carr was therefore left in possession of the premises.

"Mr. Ogilvie is a good specimen of a cosmopolite Englishman," said Madame Falk, settling herself in a comfortable chair, "still he is supremely English, so collected, so infinitely master of himself, that one is tempted to doubt that he has left any

weeds of human weakness to disfigure the carefully gravelled paths of consideration along which he moves so deliberately ! ”

“ I don’t fancy he has any heart to vex him with impulses,” cried Miss Barton, with a severe nod. “ I am sure he could be implacably cruel.”

“ Well, not cruel, for cruelty’s sake,” returned Madame Falk.

“ No—perhaps not,” said Carr with some hesitation. “ He is a very distinguished man, and can be very agreeable, but I never forgot my first impression of him when I met him at the Conroys’. I was almost startled by his likeness to Derrick Strange, one of the most desperate bushrangers that ever afflicted the colony. He had done some awful cruel things, and generous ones too. His gang was devoted to him, but he was taken at last. I remember seeing him brought through our station when I was a mere boy, and thinking him a sort of hero. After the party left our place, Derrick managed to get one hand free, snatched a revolver from the policeman who guarded him, shot him, and then blew out his own brains. He knew there was no chance for him.”

“ How curious that a resemblance could exist between such a desperado and a highly polished, highly trained, honourable English gentleman ! ” said Madame Falk meditatively.

“ It is the accident of birth and education, Madame Falk ! I can’t help fancying that Derrick was the making of a fine fellow, and I suspect if we could turn Ogilvie inside out we should find more than an exterior likeness between the honourable gentleman and the criminal. Ogilvie gives me the idea of knowing very clearly what he wants, and not stopping at trifles to get it.”

“ I have always thought that careful training upon a well-planned system has a marvellously transforming power,” replied Madame Falk, who, in spite of her practicality in action, was a great theorist.

Carr shook his head. “ Believe me, nature is the strongest always ; training may modify, may direct certain powers into different grooves, but the force will act very much in the same way ; you can never kill self in some dispositions, nor does preaching and correcting, nor self-examination, do much good. To get up and act is the plan ; one or two straightforward, kindly deeds are worth months of meditation in one’s own chamber. Then you must get hold of your own will, and there is the rub.”

"Ah, yes! That is a tremendous question, Mr Carr."

"For my part," said Miss Barton, "I believe one is born good or born bad, and few have the power to change themselves. Look at Madame Zavadoskoï! she had everything in the world to make her selfish—adored by mother, ruling her brothers, and if ever there were a set of young rips, her brothers were—and just see how kind and thoughtful and charitable *she* is."

"No doubt! but after giving away abundantly she has a large margin left!"

"I do not know how it is, but you never seem able to do Madame Zavadoskoï justice, Esther," cried Miss Barton in a huff.

"At all events she is a charming woman," said Carr, smiling, "and a very affectionate mother. I am afraid Count Alexis has been playing very high since he came here."

"And will continue to play wherever he goes," said Miss Barton. "Russian men are terrible barbarians, they cannot exist without exterior excitement."

"There are plenty of men in other races just as bad, Miss Barton; one must have an object, and to most—after ambition—play is the greatest excitement," said Carr.

"Which is yours, play or ambition?" asked Madame Falk.

"Certainly not play, a mild sort of ambition, perhaps."

"What is it? To throw off the British yoke and be an Australian dictator?"

Carr laughed.

"Nothing is further from my mind, or my desires. British rule is not a yoke. It may slip from us some day, not because we throw it off, but because it is not wide enough to hold us and no one cares to stretch it to fit the young giant that has outgrown it. No, Madame Falk, all I want is to help forward certain reforms, certain movements, and—to enjoy myself."

They floated on into sundry arguments, for they rarely agreed. Carr had scrambled up to manhood in a very accidental, and on the whole healthy, way, and from nature he had gathered some idea of the vast and minute network of causes, influences, contacts, repulsions, that mould character and exercise reflex action on the will, while Madame Falk—living for years among a largely Latin race, profoundly believed in the codification of law in every direction, and had swept her mind so clear of tradition, that she was incapable of perceiving the odd har-

mony which sometimes underlies even contradiction. Carr often vexed her by what she considered his obstinacy and blindness to the beauty of rigid rules, yet she was amused, and on the whole pleased, that a young man with the world at his foot evidently liked to discuss and dispute with her.

Miss Barton had been nodding over some knitting she had taken up, as she considered such talk sad waste of time, when Carr began to say good-bye.

"I met Mr. Riddell as I was coming along here," he said. "He is going to Dieppe on Wednesday; if you are away too his daughter will have a lonely time of it."

"On Wednesday!" repeated Madame Falk. "He never mentioned the date of his going, I should have put off our trip if I had known this—poor child! it will be *triste* for her! I *am* surprised."

"I am *not*," said Miss Barton, emphatically. "You may be sure he is going away solely for his daughter's good!"

Carr laughed.

"I must see if we cannot manage to induce May to come down to us," remarked Madame Falk thoughtfully.

"Yes, do!" exclaimed Carr with sudden earnestness. "I fancy she has a dull time of it, and there is something natural and graceful about her—she dances right well—I should like another waltz with her."

"She is a dear!" cried Madame Falk. "I often wonder what will become of her. I don't think Mr. Riddell has a relation in the world, at least not worth mentioning, or we should have heard of them, but he is just one of those men who will live for ever—he takes such care of himself. How utterly unlike him *she* is!"

"Well, my dear Madame Falk, good-bye, I shall make a point of returning to Paris before I start for home as I intend it to be—and hope to see you and have a good report of your fair *protégée*. Good-bye, Miss Barton." A hearty shake of the hand—and he was gone.

"He is on the whole a very sensible young man," was Miss Barton's sentence as she gathered up Ivan in her arms, "but I wish he and you would not argue and talk till the dinner is spoiled, and Adrienne dancing mad. I promised her she should go out at seven—and it is half-past now."

"Oh, well—she may go as soon as she puts on the dishes—and, Sarah, I think if Mère Gilet would put a small bed for me in my room at 'Le Moulin,' you and I could manage there very well, and we might give *your* room to May—she would enjoy the farm—I don't like the idea of leaving her here."

"Oh, whatever you like! I must see about dinner now."

Carr walked towards his hotel in deep thought—much that Madame Zavadoskoï had said coming back to his mind as he reflected on what had fallen from Madame Falk touching the uncertainty of May Riddell's future. It was curious that as the image of the graceful girl, her pensive expression and earnest eyes, rose before him—so did the countenance of Ogilvie. Of course it was in no way remarkable that, associating as he did with that "old twaddler" Riddell, he should call on Madame Falk, who was the Riddells' most intimate friend, and at the same time too as May. But he could not get rid of the idea that Ogilvie had intended to accompany Miss Riddell wherever she was going, and was disposed, if a quick and instantly screened glance told anything, to wring the young Cockney's throat for presuming to thrust himself into the place Ogilvie had intended to occupy. Indeed, that so reserved and fastidious a man should bestow so much time and attention on such a "wind-bag" as old Riddell had already puzzled Carr. And then to think of Ogilvie putting himself out of the way to walk with a nobody—who was neither brilliant nor important nor highly placed—it was at least remarkable. The fellow had good taste, however, Carr thought—measuring, man-like, a woman's attractions by the power they exercised over his superior in years, experience and position, and he wondered he had not perceived before how very charming Miss Riddell was. How triumphant the soft pallor of her complexion, to which the varying colour gave so much interest—the restful quiet of her manner, which never seemed disturbed by any egoistic agitations—above all the complete freedom from self-consciousness—or any expectation of being made love to, which kept her tone to men and women exactly the same. Yes—any one might love her, only Carr was not disposed to fall in love just then—he was rather sick of all that sort of thing—only he hoped Ogilvie had no fancy for her. He was a dangerous man in every sense, and could hardly fail to work mischief if—but

this is all folly," was Carr's ultimate conclusion, "I am growing a driveller."

* * * * *

"You'll be sure to persuade Mr. Riddell, May," were Madame Falk's last words next morning. "I shall be up next week and can take you back with me."

"Dearest Madame Falk! It would be only too delightful. I will ask Mr. Ogilvie to back me up, and my father is not going now till Friday or Saturday. He must wait for some letter from England, so that would give me only three or four days by myself. Don't forget to send me a card to-morrow with your address."

CHAPTER XI.

"DUST TO DUST."

MR. RIDDELL was more pliable than his daughter expected. She had prudently told him of Madame Falk's invitation in Ogilvie's presence, when they were dining with that gentleman at one of the pleasant restaurants on the Champs Elysées, the same day that Madame Falk had left town.

"I suppose you would like to go?" said Riddell, who was sipping a glass of excellent Sauterne. "You fancy the joys of a rural retreat! Believe me you will be bored to death! Of course *you* find our good friend a congenial companion, I do not; which makes a great difference. You and I like women of a different calibre. Hey, Ogilvie?"

"I must say I find Madame Falk extremely likeable," returned Ogilvie, seeking May's eyes to read gratitude in them; "she is a bright, capable woman."

"Yes. I suppose she is, but there is no accounting for taste. Well, my child, I'll see what can be arranged. It might be a nice change, and do you good. *That* is enough for me."

"It is certainly very dreary for Miss Riddell to be left to herself completely."

"Yes," added May; "even Mademoiselle Perret goes away next week."

"I shall feel obliged to stay behind to take care of you," said Ogilvie. May laughed.

"I am afraid your work is too important to be interfered

with for so trifling an object," she said. "Well, dear father, may I write to Madame Falk, and promise to return with her when she comes?"

"I suppose I may as well say yes, as I generally do," returned Mr. Riddell, with an air of resignation, and they soon rose from table.

Mr. Riddell elected to sit and listen to some very lively songs at a *café-chantant*, while Ogilvie and May strolled up the beautiful avenue.

"It is a heavenly evening," he said. "Let us take a drive through the Bois. Your father will be quite well amused where he is for an hour or two. I told him not to wait for us."

May unhesitatingly accepted the offer. Ogilvie hailed one of the little open *fiacres* which abound in Paris, and they were soon *en route*.

It was an exquisite evening, and long dwelt in May's memory as the most charming experience she had till then ever known. Ogilvie seemed to lay aside all reserve, and spoke of his opinions, his convictions, his views and hopes, with a frankness that surprised and delighted her. Was it possible that a man so accomplished, so experienced, so superior, really intended to make a friend of her? This was indeed an honour. It seemed to stir her own intelligence, to fructify whatever seeds of knowledge and reflection she had been able to store up. With what flattering attention he listened to all she said, and seemed to find it very good! The delightful excursion was over but too soon, and on reaching the house they found that Mr. Riddell had not yet returned.

"And we might have had another hour!" exclaimed Ogilvie, in such a tone of genuine regret, that May coloured with pleasure.

"I am sorry too," she said. "But it was a delightful drive, and I thank you for it heartily."

Ogilvie smiled. "The thanks are mine. I do not often find such a chance of exchanging ideas with my *Egeria*."

He lingered yet a moment under the *porte cochère*, and May, laughing at the idea of having any ideas to exchange, asked him to help in persuading her father to fulfil his promise to let her go to Madame Falk.

"A promise is a promise, is it not?"

"Yes, of course ; only——" Here Mr. Riddell came up and made some remark about their being before him, adding, "It is very good of you to trouble yourself with a chit like this girl of mine."

"That is all he knows about it. Eh ! Miss Riddell ?" returned Ogilvie with a good humoured laugh, and then took leave of them.

When May had taken off her hat and lace cape, she found her father had lit the lamp, and was scratching calculations on one of the scraps of paper of which he kept a goodly store in a large envelope, the cover of some huge circular. Mr. Riddell never *bought* anything he could possibly procure in any other way.

"How long did Madame Falk ask you to stay ?" he asked looking up as May drew a chair, and brought her book to the light.

"She did not mention any time, but I am quite sure she will keep me as long as you are away."

"Ah ! then of course you must return. I cannot do without. my little girl," said Riddell, who seemed in high good humour "Then, I think we will give Léontine the holiday she asked for. Then I shall have no mouths to fill for a fortnight except my own, and God knows *that* is easily done. Yes, my love ! you shall go to our good friend—and enjoy yourself—if the kind of life pleases you."

"Thank you," said May, simply.

"If my agents in London remit my interest to-morrow, I shall be able to start on Friday. I am sure I don't know what the fellows are about," continued Mr. Riddell in a lofty tone, as if his business alone were enough to occupy a firm. "I ought to have received it on Saturday."

The days which followed were very happily employed by May in her own preparations, which were of a very simple kind and unavoidably limited. She was greatly exhilarated by the prospect of a change, as since she arrived from school in Paris she had never left it.

Mr. Riddell's reprehensible agents sent the cash as anticipated, and he made a little speech to Léontine, granting her the desired holiday, and was generally angelic.

"I am going to breakfast with Ogilvie to-morrow," he said on the Wednesday following their dinner with that gentleman.

"He wants me to take up some work in London, something connected with translations, but I fear it is too mechanical for me. Besides, I am now so acclimatised to Paris that I do not know if I could live in the dense atmosphere of London. I fear it would not do. However, I shall hear all Ogilvie has to say. Really it is long since I met a man who suited me so well. He is highly cultivated, and quite on an intellectual footing with myself. I feel, too, that he appreciates me, which ordinary men do not. I am sure if I could assist him in his diplomatic work it would give me great pleasure. So, May, my love, you need make no provision for my breakfast to-morrow."

This happy mood continued next day.

Having dressed with his usual care, Mr. Riddell carefully locked up nearly all the loose money in his pocket, observing, "I shall only want a cab fare or so, and it is as well not to carry too much about with one. Good-bye, dear child. Let us have dinner half-an-hour earlier. I want to do my packing this evening, so as to have no hurry in the morning. Have *all* my things ready and laid on my bed before I come in." So saying, he kissed her brow, and went out.

The hours sped swiftly, for May was busy arranging and putting away things, being too unaccustomed to leave home not to make a mountain of a molehill. Then she had to write a joyous letter to Madame Falk, to announce her father's intended departure and her own readiness to start whenever Madame Falk came to town.

It was a warm day, and about five o'clock, feeling tired, she lay down on the drawing-room sofa, with an interesting number of *La Revue des deux Mondes*, and was almost asleep over it, when a sharp ring startled her, and as she sprang to her feet she heard Ogilvie's voice speaking to Léontine. The next moment he had crossed the threshold and stood looking at her silently. There was something in his face that struck her with sudden terror.

"What—what has happened?" she exclaimed clasping her hands together.

"Your father has met with a bad accident," he said in a low, quiet voice.

"Ah! Mr. Ogilvie, tell me the truth—is he—is he dead?"

"No—he is *not* dead, but in a hopeless condition. He asked for you—come with me——"

"Where—where?" was all she could say.

"At the Hospital —, not far. I will tell you all as we go along—do not lose time."

May, though trembling from head to foot, promptly obeyed. When she returned to the *salon*, she found Ogilvie had spoken to Léontine, and had some wine on the table, which he insisted on her drinking.

"After breakfasting together this morning," said Ogilvie, as they drove towards the hospital, "we sat talking for a considerable time, and as I had a visit to pay in the Rue Tilsit, your father walked with me. Not finding the man I wished to see we returned together and went some little way down the Avenue Wagram. Here your father bid me good morning. He attempted to cross the road where it is steepest, and finding a large omnibus coming rapidly upon him, he started forward to avoid it. His foot must have caught in something, or he trod on a stone which turned, for suddenly, to my horror, he pitched forward on his face under a large cart, with a pair of horses, which was coming down at a good pace. I saw it all. It was impossible to save him, he was under the horses' feet in a second, and sustained severe injuries."

"Is he—oh, is he suffering much?" asked May, who was holding Ogilvie's hand with a nervous grasp.

"I think not—I hope not. He was only half-conscious, but he did say a few words to me and asked for you. It is a terrible shock for you, my dear girl. You have need of all your courage, but remember you have at least one devoted friend."

"If only he does not suffer," she murmured. "Is there no hope?"

"I dare not encourage any," he returned. Then there was silence, save for a broken exclamation now and again, faintly uttered by May, until the hospital was reached.

May was too dazed to notice much till she was led into a small and rather bare room, exquisitely clean, where on a narrow bed lay a form, dimly visible through the coverlet, and a death-like face she knew well upon the pillow. She let Ogilvie's arm go and walked steadily to the bed-side. Was she too late? As she stood there with clasped hands, awed into composure, the dying man opened his eyes with a strange light in them, a faint smile flickered over his ghastly face, then the light died away, and the

solemn stillness of everlasting rest settled down on face and form.

Ogilvie drew near, with a vague idea that May might fail and faint, but she kept quite still for a while, and then bent down to kiss her father's brow. Then the icy touch told her she had no father, and she drew back with a shudder.

Ogilvie drew her arm through his. "You can do no more for him," he whispered. "He had the comfort of recognising you!"

"I do not like to leave him," she whispered.

"Trust me. I have secured proper attendance, all that you can wish. You shall return to-morrow, if you desire it," said Ogilvie in a low tone. "Spare yourself! Leave yourself in my hands."

A painful, dizzy sensation seemed to paralyse May's heart; she did not lose consciousness, but she did not quite know what she was doing. She held Ogilvie's arm closely. She knew she was moving, then she felt fresher air on her brow, and found herself in a sort of vestibule or anti-chamber.

"Come, there is nothing more to be done," said Ogilvie softly. "I will take you home. Remember he is past all pain now and you may rest. You have been a good daughter."

Then she was in the luminous darkness of the summer night, and felt the motion of a carriage, and knew that her hand was gently, tenderly held—that she was not alone.

Arrived at her home, she was tearfully embraced by Mademoiselle Perret, and overwhelmed by a torrent of ejaculations expressive of grief and affection.

"You will not leave her till I return to-morrow," said Ogilvie. "I take all care and responsibility on myself. I have been Mr Riddell's nearest friend of late years. You will promise me," he continued, bending over May, who had sunk into a chair, "to try to sleep. I shall be with you early to-morrow, and I shall telegraph to Madame Falk. You can rest, for what can be done has been done."

Mademoiselle Perret volubly assured him that she would not leave the beloved, afflicted child for a moment, and sobbed and wiped her eyes till anyone might have supposed that *she* was the bereaved one. Yet the little woman was quite sincere in all this display of feeling.

With a lingering hand-clasp, Ogilvie left May to her kindly

care, and then Léontine and Mademoiselle Perret persuaded their charge to go to bed, and the latter established herself at her side. It seemed to May that she could never sleep again, and even as she thought so the blessed balm of sleep stole over her, for the sudden and terrible shock had thoroughly exhausted her.

What varied and innumerable descriptions have been penned of the painful bewilderment, the intensified bitterness, with which those who have been struck down by sudden grief or loss, awake after brief oblivion to renewed consciousness of the blow—yet no words can adequately describe it.

To May it seemed when she opened her eyes the next morning that she realised for the first time the full meaning of what had befallen her. First and keenest came the sad certainty that her father must have suffered horribly. His haggard, drawn face suggested past torture, and she was not there to soothe or help him, and now she could never do anything for him again. Had she ever done enough? Had she not been impatient with his little foibles, and harsh towards what seemed to her his faults? What was she that she should judge?

Where is the eloquence that can send reproach to shiver through the heart, like the silence of death? Then she felt shocked at her own want of real grief. On the whole her father was kind to her, and she was cold to him, and irresponsible; still he never seemed dissatisfied with her. At such a time, poor child, she would not allow herself to remember the isolation of her life with a man refrigerated by selfishness into an icy semblance of humanity, incapable of "giving out" anything, and stone-blind to truth. The death of such a father would be no heart-loss to any child.

Still, thought was very painful. May was thankful to get up and dress, to move about, often sitting down to collect her ideas, and wish that Ogilvie would come soon. What could she do without him? She would leave herself entirely in his hands. But he was going away. Ah! she must put *that* out of her mind, or she could not control herself. At last Ogilvie did come—she did not know how early he really did come. Then she felt stronger and more composed.

She begged him to take her once more to see her father before he was taken away for—— This Ogilvie gently but firmly refused,

and persuaded her to give up her intention. Then he asked her about her own and her father's relatives. Beyond her mother's brother she knew none, and she was vaguely aware that Riddell was not on friendly terms with her uncle. Indeed, the deceased always asserted that his brother-in-law had behaved badly, nay infamously, to him. It was significant of May's habitual distrust of her father's statements, that she did not think it necessary to mention this estrangement to Ogilvie when he suggested writing to this relative.

"When do you go to England?" asked May when there was a little break in the conversation. She spoke very low, with an occasional tremor in her voice, which touched Ogilvie profoundly—she was so calm and strove so bravely to keep up and give as little trouble as possible.

"I can stay long enough to be of use to you," he returned, and stopped for a moment, then with a slight effort added: 'Your poor father—in an interval of consciousness—asked me to take care of you, to act as your guardian, and I promised I would. I will fulfil that promise, May.'

"It was not right to lay such a burden on you, a comparative stranger," faltered May, struggling with the tears which would well up, chiefly because of the infinite comfort his words sent glowing through her veins.

"Am I a stranger in any sense?" he asked, stretching out his hand. "Do you hesitate to trust me?"

"Ah, no! I trust you as I never trusted any one before," she exclaimed, putting her hand in his. "Not even dear Madame Falk!" A smile, a kindly smile, passed over Ogilvie's lips as he held her hand gently for a moment.

"Then you accept my guardianship? I shall have but a short tenure of office. In less than a year you will be of age, will you not? Now, I want you to go up to Madame Falk's rooms. The officials will soon be here to affix seals on all the receptacles which may contain papers, etc. So make your servant take up whatever you may want for a few days, until all the formalities are gone through. The *concierge* will no doubt give us the key. Indeed, every one in the house seems anxious to do what they can for you."

May unhesitatingly obeyed; she was only too glad to have so good a friend to obey.

She had hardly left the *entresol* when the men of the law arrived, and she was thankful she had escaped their presence.

As soon as she possibly could Madame Falk was on the scene of action, and, as usual, a potent and efficient help.

She at once took possession of May, and Ogilvie found an admirable colleague.

Then she arranged all about the mourning for the young orphan, accompanied her to pay the last tribute of respect to the deceased, and petted and coddled her *protégée* to her heart's content.

When at length, all legal regulations having been observed, May was free to examine what remained to her, and remove her belongings to Madame Falk's apartment that the *entresol* might be given up to the proprietor, it was found that beyond the quarter's income, just received, a few books and trifling personal possessions, such as clothes, a watch, and some ornaments of small value, Riddell had literally left nothing.

He had, after his wife's death, sunk all the property he could call his own in the purchase of an annuity, within which he managed by strict economy to live, and not a farthing remained for the support of his daughter.

"I wonder he could sleep in his bed at night when he thought of that poor, dear child!" cried Madame Falk indignantly. She was taking final counsel with Ogilvie, who was on the point of leaving Paris, respecting May's affairs.

"Yes, but he did not think of her," returned Ogilvie calmly.

"Now she is absolutely penniless," continued Madame Falk, "and I don't much see how she is to help herself; she has had next to no education. I might get her some writing or translations here and there, but it would amount to very little."

"Riddell has at least left next to no debt. In fact, the order in which he kept his affairs are admirable, and as we can give up the apartment and send off the servant, all expenses can be stopped at once," resumed Ogilvie.

"Certainly May is more fortunate than many a fatherless girl, in having good friends," said Madame Falk. "That dear, kind creature, Mrs. Conroy, has sent me a handsome cheque for her use, and an invitation to stay as long as she likes, until she makes some plan for the future; in short, Mrs. Conroy told me not to mention the cheque to May; but that sort of delicacy is non-

sense, so I did tell May, who is quite sensible, and greatly touched by Mrs. Conroy's kindness. I think she will go to Audeley Chase by-and-by, for Frances wrote such an affectionate letter she could not well refuse. But I can see she will never be content to live on charity. I wish she could get a position as companion or secretary to some rich old English-woman, there are such lots of them."

"Ah—yes, it is a good idea, Madame Falk. Poor May! it would be very dull for her," said Ogilvie reflectively.

"Women who have to earn their bread cannot be choosers. I should dearly like to keep her myself, but I cannot do that just at present. I will take her away with me for a fortnight's rest, and then see her off to Dieppe. The Conroys will send someone to meet her in London."

"It is well planned. People are rather scattered just now, but when they begin to gather together again, I shall look for some elderly, unencumbered lady, who requires care and companionship," said Ogilvie, smiling.

"Pray do, Mr. Ogilvie; and now let me thank you both on my own account and May's, for all your help, and all your goodness! I do not know what we should have done without you. And I confess, with shame, that I thought you cold and selfish."

"You are right, Madame Falk. I am both, towards the world in general; therefore, what warmth I have for the very few who interest me is all the warmer. May Riddell is an excellent specimen of English girlhood and interests me. Her father amused me, and I had my reasons for cultivating him. If I can be of service to the daughter, it will give me infinite pleasure. I trust that by-and-bye some honest young fellow will see what an admirable wife she would make. She is out, you say?"

"Yes, she has gone to put some flowers on her father's grave."

"Well, I shall take my chance of finding her to-night, or to-morrow morning, for the day after I must go to London. I have already over-stayed my time."

So they parted, mutually satisfied; indeed, Madame Falk felt quite enthusiastic about Ogilvie.

"He is really a good man," she thought, "and will be a most useful friend for poor, dear May! Should he happen to marry

Frances Conroy, so much the better, as they will join in assisting my young *protégé*. And, of course, Ogilvie *must* marry money."

Madame Falk had some difficulty in mentioning her late father with anything like patience to May, so angered was she by the evidence of his extreme selfishness. To sink all he possessed for his own advantage during his lifetime, thus leaving his daughter totally unprovided for, seemed to her distinctly criminal. When the quarter's rent had been paid, the cost of the funeral and mourning settled, May would have been absolutely penniless but for Mrs. Conroy's cheque. "And thank goodness I have managed to get her a good rig-out," was Madame Falk's pious ejaculation. "She can manage nearly three months at Audeley Chase without any renewal." So she went cheerfully about her work, for all her sympathy and ready help, her counsel and direction, were mixed with rapidly-written articles on dress, fashion, sea-side gossip, the "on-dits" of the political and artistic worlds.

This had been a very busy day with Madame Falk, but it was not over yet. While solacing herself with a cup of tea, about five o'clock, a telegram was handed to her.

"Good heavens! This is a surprise!" she exclaimed as she opened it.

"What is it?" asked May.

"It is from my Californian editor. He arrived in Paris to-day, and wants me to dine with him at the 'Hotel Splendide,' and have a talk, as he starts for Russia to-morrow morning. Of course I must go. Shall you mind being left alone, May?"

"No, not at all! If I feel lonely I shall go and see Made-moiselle Perret. I do not dislike being alone."

"Perhaps not, but it is not good for you! I know you fret yourself!"

"Wonderfully little, Madame Falk. I sometimes think I have no heart."

"You will find that you have more than enough. I must put on my best bib and tucker. I do wonder what the man has to say to me. I hope he has some very advantageous offer to make!"

When Madame Falk had made up her packets for the foreign post, and, with May's help, dressed very carefully, she set out in remarkably good spirits to keep her tryst. May gave her a

kiss, and a hearty "God speed," and returned to her friend's "Cabinet d'Etude," which she put in order, as far as she dared. Then she gave water to the flowers in the *salon*, and the plants on the balcony, and opened the Venetian blinds. The sun was now for some time off that side of the house, and a deliciously cool air came in through the windows. She sat down to enjoy the freshness, and to think. The first sharp impression of her father's death had worn off, and the sense of her extreme isolation pressed more and more upon her. She rather dreaded her visit to the Conroys, though she had firm faith in their kindness and constancy; but she dreaded a plunge into a society of strangers, probably uninteresting strangers. Then the future! Here the door-bell rang, and she went to answer the summons, for Adrienne had been left in the country with Miss Barton. At the door she found Ogilvie.

"May I come in?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, pray do! Madame Falk has gone out, but I am so glad you have come."

"And I am not sorry to have a few words with you alone," he said as he followed her to the *salon*. "How sweet and cool it is here! And—how white you look!" sitting down beside her on the sofa near the window.

"But I am quite well, only a little tired. Do you leave Paris to-morrow, Mr. Ogilvie?"

"Yes, and by a morning train, which accounts for my presence here this evening. And you will not be many days behind me, I believe?"

"I hope not. It will be very desolate when you are gone."

"Thank you. I am so glad I was of use to you. And you are going to stay with the Conroys? Do you think you will be happy there?"

"Yes. Frances is really fond of me. I know they are kindness itself, but I do not like to be a pensioner on their bounty, if I could do something for myself."

"Yes, it would be better. I confess to having an idea for you, but I must be in London to follow it up. Say nothing of this to anyone. Just leave yourself in your guardian's hands."

"Ah! that I will, most willingly. But do you really think you could find me some employment by which I could maintain myself?"

"I do, May. Leave it to me."

They talked on, till the twilight came gently round them, of the past and future—of thoughts and visions, with many a break and pause.

"I should like you to be settled in London," said Ogilvie, as he was bidding her good-bye. "I shall probably be there for some time, and I want to have my ward under my own eye."

"And I should like it, too."

"Remember you keep me informed which day you are to cross; and what arrangements have been made for your journey. Adieu for a week or two. And never allow yourself to feel desolate. Write to me whenever you want me. Here is my London address." He put a card on the table, held her hand in both his for a moment, and was gone.

(To be continued.)

Witches and Witchcraft.

A CURIOUS chapter indeed in History is that upon witches and witchcraft. A witch, according to old descriptions, was generally blessed with a "wrinkled face, a furred brow, a hairy lip, a gobber tooth, a squint eye, a squeaking voice, a scolding tongue, a ragged coat on her back, a scull-cap on her head, a spindle in her hand, and a dog or cat by her side," and Lord Coke pithily describes a witch to be a person that hath conference with the devil, to consult with him or to do some act. In former times the most learned and eminent men and philosophers were not proof against the prevailing opinions. Strangely enough the Reformed Religion at first rather augmented than diminished the evil. A degree of importance, hardly credible in these times, was attached to the crime of witchcraft. The most eminent divines preached against it. The most learned lawyers and doctors believed in it, and unbelievers were accounted, "Sadducees, Atheists, and Infidels," and had forcible denunciations hurled at them from the pulpit. It is not surprising, therefore, that the supposed dabblers in the infernal art were hunted out and exposed to the most dreadful cruelty and oppression, not only from those who imagined they had suffered under their charms, but from the very laws of the realm also.

According to Strype, Bishop Jewel, preaching before the Queen, in 1558, said: "It may please your grace to understand that witches and sorcerers, within these few last years are marvelously increased within your grace's realm. Your grace's subjects pine away even unto the death, their colour fadeth, their flesh rotteth, their speech is benumbed, their senses are bereft. I pray God they never practise *further than upon the subject.*" "This," says Strype, "I make no doubt was the occasion of bringing in a bill, the next Parliament, for making enchantments and witchcraft felony." One of the bishop's strong expressions is, "These eyes have seen most evident and manifest marks of their wickedness."

In Archbishop Cranmer's Articles of Visitation, 1594, is the

following :—" Item, You shall enquire whether you know of any that use charms, sorcery, enchantments, witchcraft, soothsaying, or any like craft, invented by the Devil."

John Bell, minister of the gospel at Gladsmuir, says :—" Providently, two tests appeared to discover the crime: If the witch cries out 'Lord have mercy upon me!' when apprehended ; and the inability of shedding tears ; because, as a witch could only shed three tears, and those with her left eye, her stock was quickly exhausted ; and that was the more striking, as King James I. shrewdly observes, 'since other women in general are like the crocodile, ready to weep on every slight occasion.'"

The first trial of any note in England took place in 1593, when three persons, old Samuel, his wife and his daughter Agnes, were condemned at Huntingdon before Mr. Justice Fenner, for bewitching the family of a Mr. Throgmorton. The last execution took place also at Huntingdon in 1716, when a Mrs. Hicks, and her daughter, a child of *nine*, were hanged for selling their souls to the Devil, and raising a storm, by pulling off their stockings and making a lather of soap! With this crowning atrocity, the catalogue of murders in England closes ; the penal statutes against witchcraft being repealed in 1736, and the pretended exercise of such arts being punished in future by imprisonment and the pillory.

It is lamentable to think that during this period over thirty thousand persons were put to death in England on the charge of witchcraft, and this does not include those who were tried on suspicion, sentenced to minor punishments, or acquitted for want of sufficient proof against them.

In Lancashire alone, between the years 1602 and 1701, 3,192 persons were executed, but then Lancashire was always remarkable for the number of its witches, and when the detestable doctrine was established both by law and fashion and it was not only impolitic but criminal to doubt it, witches were every day discovered and multiplied so fast in some places that Bishop Hall mentions a village in Lancashire where their number was greater than that of the houses.

Old and ill-favoured women were not the only victims, though they were in the majority ; men old and young, good-looking maidens, children of tender years, were likewise included in the list, even clergymen did not escape the doom. In 1644 a Mr.

Lowes, an innocent and aged clergyman, vicar of Brandeston, was denounced by the infamous Mathew Hopkins the witchfinder and his associates, and on their testimony was executed.

This Hopkins, who styled himself Witchfinder-General, was commissioned by Parliament to perform a circuit for the discovery of witches, and had 20s. allowed him for every town he visited. Thus authorised, he and his associates went from place to place, and caused sixteen persons to be hanged at Yarmouth, forty at Bury, and others in different parts, to the amount of sixty. A cooper, his wife, and fifteen other women he had executed at one time at Bury. Besides the arts Hopkins resorted to in order to extort confession from suspected persons he had recourse to swimming them, which was done by tying their thumbs and great toes together, previous to throwing them into the water; if they sank it was a proof of their innocence, but if they floated they were guilty. It is satisfactory to know that at last he was hoist with his own petard. Some gentlemen, indignant at his barbarity, tied his own thumbs and toes together and threw him into the water, when he swam, thus proving himself to be a witch. By this expedient the country was cleared of him.

There was a Scotchman did at Newcastle what Hopkins did in other parts of England; he pretended to find out witches by pricking them with pins, and had twenty shillings apiece for all he should condemn. Some thirty women were brought into the Town Hall, had pins thrust into their flesh, and most of them were found guilty and executed. When he had done in Newcastle and received his wages, he went into the neighbouring counties to try women there and got £3 a piece, but it gives one a thrill of satisfaction to learn that Nemesis, in the person of Henry Ogle Esq., laid hold of him and required bond of him to answer at the sessions. He escaped into Scotland where he was made prisoner, indicted, arraigned and condemned for such like villainy exercised in Scotland. This monster in human form confessed at the gallows that he had been the death of above 220 women in England and Scotland for the gain of 20s. a piece.

Everybody has heard of the Witches' Dance, but everybody has *not* heard that the accomplishment of waltzing, so dear to the hearts of girls in their teens, is derived from the orgies of the

devils and witches during the ceremony of initiation, who on these occasions never failed to dance. Each witch had a broom-stick in her hand and held it up aloft. "Also that these night-walking, or rather night-dancing devils brought out of Italy into France that dance which is called 'La Volta.'" The chronicler adds with a considerable amount of *naïveté*: "This is certainly the origin of the modern waltz; and that it should take its derivation from so diabolical a source is much to be lamented."

When a suspected witch was to be tried by the ordeal of swimming she was stripped of all her habiliments save her under garment, her feet and hands were tied together and she was thrown into deep water. If she sank, her friends had the satisfaction of knowing she was innocent, though it could not have been very satisfactory to the suspected ones themselves, seeing that in many instances the poor creatures were drowned; but if she floated she was guilty, and a true witch could no more sink than a piece of cork; she might try all she knew and dive down in the water like a duck, but all to no avail, the water would reject her, and those assembled would be quite satisfied that she was one of those slaves of the Devil yclept a Witch.

The following curious letter is copied from a manuscript in the British Museum:—

"From Mr. Manning, Dissenting Teacher at Halstead in Essex,
to John Morley Esq., Halstead.

"Halstead, Aug 2, 1732.

"Sir—The narrative which I gave you in relation to witchcraft and which you are pleased to lay your commands upon me to repeat, is as follows:

"There was one Master Collett, a smith by trade, of Haveningham, in the County of Suffolk, who, as 'twas customary with him, was assisting the maide to churn, and not being able (as the phrase is) to make the butter come, threw a hot iron into the churn, under the notion of witchcraft in the case, upon which a poor labourer, then employed in carrying of dung in the yard, cried out in a terrible manner, 'they have killed me, they have killed me'; still keeping his hand upon his back, intimating where the pain was, and died upon the spot.

"Mr. Collett, with the rest of the servants then present, took off the poor man's clothes, and found to their great surprise,

the mark of the iron that was heated and thrown into the churn, deeply impressed upon his back. This account I had from Mr. Collett's own mouth, who, being a man of unblemished character, I verily believe to be matter of fact.

"I am, Sir, your obliged humble servant,

"SAM. MANNING."

Two unfortunate women, Rose Cullender and Amy Duny, widows, both of Leystoff in the county of Suffolk, were tried at the assizes at Bury St. Edmunds on the 10th March 1664 before Sir Matthew Hale on a charge of bewitching several children. These children were affected in an extraordinary manner; they fell into strange and violent fits, "screeching" out in a most sad manner like unto whelps and not like sensible creatures, having dreadful pains in the stomach like the pricking of pins, falling into "swooundings" and upon recovery they would cough "extreamly" and bring up many crooked pins and sometimes nails. When told to read a chapter in the New Testament they would do it correctly until they came to the name of Lord, or Jesus or Christ, when they would instantly fall into their fits before they could pronounce either of the said words. But if they came to the name of Satan or Devil, they would clap their fingers upon the Book crying out, "This bites but makes me speak right well." On being asked why they could not pronounce the name, they said the women prevented them and threatened them that if they related anything they saw or heard they would torment them ten times more.

These children further declared that flies came to them, carrying the pins which they forced them to swallow, and which sorely afflicted their stomachs.

Sometimes they were stricken with blindness, at others with deafness or lameness, and when recovered from these fits they always declared that Amy Duny and Rose Cullender were the persons who afflicted them. Dr. Brown of Norwich, a person of great knowledge, was called in to give his opinion, which he did that the children were bewitched and said, "That in Denmark there had been lately a great discovery of Witches, who used the very same way of Afflicting Persons, by conveying Pins into them, and crooked as these Pins were, with needles and Nails. And his opinion was, that the Devil in such cases did

work upon the Bodies of Men and Women upon a Natural Foundation, (that is) to stir up and excite such humours superabounding in their Bodies to a great excess, whereby he did in an extraordinary manner Afflict them with such Distempers as their Bodies were most subject to, as particularly appeared in these Children ; for he conceived, that these swooning fits were Natural, and no thing else but that they call the Mother, but only heightened to a great excess by the subtilty of the Devil, co-operating with the Malice of these which we term Witches, at whose instance he doth these Villanies."

Not a very lucid explanation it seems by a person of such knowledge as Dr. Brown laid claim to have.

To the honour of some concerned in the Court, they were not all satisfied with the evidence, Mr. Serjeant Theeling saying it was not sufficient evidence to convict the prisoners and some gentlemen openly protested that they did believe the whole transaction of this business was a mere imposture.

But this was not the opinion of the majority nor of Sir Matthew Hale himself, who in his address to the jury said, "That they had only two things to enquire after. First whether or not these Children were Bewitched? Secondly, whether the Prisoners at the Bar were guilty of it? That there were such Creatures as Witches he made no doubt at all ; for, First the Scriptures had affirmed so much. Secondly, The wisdom of all Nations had provided Laws against such persons which is an argument of their confidence of such a Crime. And such hath been the judgment of this Kingdom, as appears by that Act of Parliament which hath provided Punishments proportionable to the quality of the offence."

In the short space of half an hour the jury found them guilty. Marvellous to relate, in the self-same hour the children regained their health, sleeping well, and feeling no pain from the moment of the conviction. The next morning they with their parents came to the Lord Chief Baron Hale's lodging, and all "spake perfectly, and were in as good health as ever they were."

They were brought down to the Court, and "affirmed in the face of the Country, and before the Witches themselves, what before hath been deposed by their Friends and Relations, the Prisoners not much contradicting them. In Conclusion, the Judge and all the Court were fully satisfied with the Verdict, and

thereupon gave Judgment against the Witches that they should be hanged. They were much urged to confess but would not. They were Executed on Monday, the seventeenth of March following, but they Confessed nothing."

This Sir Matthew Hale, who so thoroughly believed in witches, is spoken of by one of his contemporaries as being a judge whom for his integrity, learning and law, hardly any age, either before or since, could parallel.

It was not in the old country alone this dreadful superstition held full sway. The disease, and a very fatal disease it must have been, followed the emigrants who settled in New England, and who included among their number, Presbyterians, Calvinists, Quakers, Anabaptists and other sects of Independents. The Calvinists, the most wealthy of the settlers, brought with them the same zeal for religion and strict morality, which everywhere distinguished them, but unfortunately they also brought with them their proneness to believe in supernatural and direct personal intercourse between the Devil and his vassals. The Calvinist ministers were much to blame in encouraging this extraordinary delusion, and among them was one young clergyman, an indefatigable student, remarkable for his memory and for the immense amount of verbal knowledge he possessed; he was also somewhat vain and credulous, and exceedingly fond of the marvellous, with a deep-rooted belief in witchcraft. He was Cotton Mather, son of Increase Mather, and to his zeal and fanaticism many poor wretches owed their deaths. He sincerely believed the tales the "possessed" told him, and wrote a book to prove the truth of witchcraft. This book was re-published in London, with an approving preface written by Richard Baxter, and had its influence upon the minds of the people and prepared the way for the sad scenes which followed.

The symptoms in New England cases were very much the same as those in Old England, and the first persons to be bewitched were children. They stiffened their necks so hard at one time that the joints could not be moved, at other times their necks were so flexible and supple, that it seemed the bone was dissolved. They had violent contortions, in which their jaws snapped with the force of a spring-trap. Their limbs were curiously contorted and seemed entirely dislocated and displaced, their mouths were stopped, their throats choked, thorns

were stuck into their flesh, and pins were ejected from their stomachs. In the midst of these contortions they called out upon those whom they said bewitched them. These afflicted persons declared they saw the spectres of those who tormented and tortured them. Sometimes these spectres offered their victims a book, on signing which they would be freed from their torments. Sometimes the devil appeared in person and added his eloquence to move the afflicted ones to consent.

At first the poor and miserable alone were involved, but presently the bewitched began to accuse persons of higher character and irreproachable lives, several of whom were executed. As was the case everywhere, the more that suffered the greater became the number of afflicted persons who complained of being tormented by new objects as the former were removed, and the wider and the more numerous were the denunciations against supposed witches. No one was safe. The accused were of all ranks and ages. In these days it is horrible to think that an infant of five years of age was indicted by some of the bewitched, who imagined they saw this juvenile wizard active in tormenting them, and appealed to the mark of little teeth on their bodies, where they stated he had bitten them. The possessed, however, were not content with having human victims; animals as well suffered for their diseased imaginations, a poor dog was hanged as having been alleged to be busy in this infernal persecution. No wonder such gross insults on common reason occasioned a revulsion in public feeling, but unfortunately not till many lives had been sacrificed. By this means in Salem, nineteen men and women were executed, besides a stout-hearted man named Cory, who refused to plead, and was accordingly pressed to death, according to the old law. Sir Walter Scott in his letters on Demonology, relates that on this horrible occasion a circumstance took place, disgusting to humanity, which must yet be told, to show how superstition can steel the heart of a man against the misery of his fellow-creature. The dying man, in the mortal agony, thrust out his tongue, which the sheriff crammed with his cane back again into his mouth.

Eight persons were condemned besides those who had actually suffered, and no less than two hundred were in prison and under examination, when men began to ask

whether the devil might not artfully deceive the afflicted into the accusation of good and innocent persons by presenting witches and fiends in their resemblance as engaged in the tormenting of their diseased country folk. This argument was by no means inconsistent with the belief in witchcraft, and was the more readily listened to on that account. Besides, men found that no rank or condition could save them from the danger of this horrible accusation if they continued to encourage the witnesses in such an unlimited course as had hitherto been granted them. Influenced by these reflections, the settlers awoke as from a dream, the prosecutions were therefore suddenly stopped, the prisoners dismissed, the condemned pardoned, and even those who had confessed, the number of whom was very extraordinary—indeed some of the poor wretches seemed to glory in the baneful notoriety they gained by such means—were pardoned amongst others, and Cotton Mather, who was deeply convinced of the reality of the crime, thus records the result :

“When this prosecution ceased, the Lord so chained up Satan, that the afflicted grew presently well. The accursed were generally quiet, and for five years there was no such molestation among us.”

Several of the judges and jurors concerned in the sentence of those who were executed; published their penitence for their rashness in convicting these unfortunate persons, and one of the judges, a man of the most importance in the colony, observed, during the rest of his life, the anniversary of the first execution as a day of solemn fast and humiliation for his own share in the transaction. Not much satisfaction, it is to be feared, to those who had lost their dear ones through the morbid belief which had taken such a strong hold of the imagination of all classes.

There were some curious superstitions connected with witches. It was supposed that their master the devil, gave the witches a salve by the use of which they might render themselves invisible, transform themselves into animals and pass through the air, the better to perform their diabolical work. He likewise placed a mark upon them such as a mole or other spot which had no feeling, hence the practice of thrusting pins into the flesh of suspected persons. It was the infallible sign of a witch if she

exhibited no pain when the long pin was thrust in, and if no blood came from the puncture.

It was also supposed, that when the witch endured the torture which was generally inflicted to make them confess, with uncommon patience, or moreover fell asleep by it, as it often mysteriously happened, the devil had given them this insensibility through an amulet (a sort of physical composition or charm to wear about the person, as a preservation against plague, poison, enchantment, or to remove diseases, etc.), which they kept concealed about them.

In the case of a first trial of a witch, she was forced to enter the court backwards and without shoes, which she had to leave outside. The beadle or other official appointed, seized her by her hair and led her thus to the bar, and not until then was she allowed to turn round and look at the judges. This custom arose from an erroneous supposition, that on her very first entrance she might at once bewitch the judges with her looks.

It might be thought that witches would be enriched by selling their souls to the devil, but such was not the case, for "Satan to dishonour God always bought them at a dead bargain that they might not by such riches betray themselves."

As might have been expected witchcraft was very prevalent in Germany, and some remarkable trials took place in various provinces there and many people were executed.

One Lise Kolken had the power of turning herself into a woodpecker. One day this woman's husband was missing and the woodpecker was seen upon the ground, crying lamentably, with a tuft of red hair before it, exactly like her husband's, old Seden's, but on being observed this Devil's spectre made a great noise with its bill and forthwith crept into a knot-hole. More hair was discovered in the tree above, looking as though it were glued to the leaves with pitch, but it was not pitch, it looked red and white and the leaves round about were of divers colours speckled and full of a horrible stench. Then they were sure that this was old Seden's hair and brains, and that the Devil had taken him alive because he would not pray and thank the Lord for restoring him from his sickness. His wicked wife Lise had persuaded him to follow in her evil ways, but she feigned as though the greatest calamity had befallen her, plucked out her red hair by whole handfuls and lamented that she was now left

a poor widow with no one to provide for her. However it came out that the old man had been heard threatening his gloaring-eyed wife, that he would tell the priest, that she, as he now certainly knew, had an evil spirit; whereupon the old man had soon disappeared. Though she tried to put the crime upon others, orders were given that she should be taken and brought before the High Court. When she found herself deserted by her familiar, as she supposed, she sent for the minister to come to her and give her the sacrament.

When he entered the prison he saw old Lise lying upon the earth on a bundle of straw with a besom for a pillow (as if thereon she would now ride down into hell, as she could no longer ride thereupon to the Blocksberg), so that he shuddered when he got sight of her. Scarcely had he entered when she fearfully cried out:

"I am a witch, have compassion on me and quickly give me the sacrament, and verily I will confess all to you."

But he would not give her the sacrament, only told her to confess, when she said that she herself had wrought all the witchcraft in the village, and was the cause of her old husband's eeing carried off through the air. She said that one day he had seen her spirit, which she had in her box, in the shape of a black cat and which was called "Stoffer," and as he threatened to tell these things, she caused him to be made sick by her spirit so that he despaired of his recovery. Then she beguiled him with the hope that she would forthwith heal him if he would renounce God. This he promised to do, and she had quickly made him hearty again, whereupon they had gone down to the sea and he had been baptized in the name of Satan, and called Hans. But he was only a half-hearted wizard after all, and in revenge the spirit had carried him away. Then she begged for absolution, but the priest would not administer the sacrament to so heinous a sinner, and thereupon a worm about a finger's length, and yellow at the tail, came crawling in at the prison door. When she saw this she raised a most horrible shriek and her red hair waxed as stiff as the brushwood of the besom she was lying on, and she roared out that it was the spirit sent for her and she had much to confess, that she had been a witch these thirty years, and cried and shrieked for the sacrament. Thus roaring she struck about with her hands and feet, because that the nasty

worm raised itself, hummed and drummed itself about her where she lay, so that it was horrible to look upon and to hear. Then she called upon God, her own spirit "Stoffer," and upon the priest to come to her help, till the worm all at once ran down her open jaws, whereupon she instantly gave up the ghost, and became black and blue like unto a bramble-berry. Then was heard a slight jingling of the window as if a pea had been thrown against it, whence it was readily concluded that Satan had passed through it with her soul.

But wonders did not end here, for, at the burial of old Lise, when the bearers were about letting down the coffin into the grave, there arose a loud noise in the same, as if a joiner was boring into a piece of fir timber, whence they believed the old witch was coming to life again and opened the coffin. But she lay as before, brown and blue in colour, and cold as ice; nevertheless her eyes had opened, so that every man was affrighted, expecting a Devil's spectre, and verily soon after a living rat sprang out of the coffin, and ran into a dead man's skull that was lying by the side of the grave. Now all the people ran away forasmuch as old Lise had ever been evil reported. But at length the pastor went near the grave again, whereupon the rat vanished and the rest took courage. They easily guessed that this was in troth Satan that had run down the jaws of the old hag and taken the form of a rat; albeit they marvelled what he could have been doing so long in the carcase, except that it was that evil spirits love whatsoever things are filthy as the angels of God whatsoever things are pure and lovely.

In order to raise a storm, witches had to stand in the water and throw some backwards over their heads if they wished to produce one at sea, but if they sought to make one in the mountains they had to beat the stones soundly with a stick.

Satan often assisted his allies, the witches, in their nefarious work by assuming various forms and disguises, and thus aiding them to lead others astray. Some of the most noted divines agreed in this; that the apparition which the witch of Endor showed unto King Saul had not been Samuel in troth, but that hateful Satan; nevertheless Saul had taken him for Samuel.

It was supposed that when a witch pledged herself to the Devil, the latter likewise pledged himself in *writing*, and gave

her a compact-paper, and this was one of the first things searched for when a person was denounced as a witch.

A Netherlandish physician, Johannem Wierum, wrote a work treating at large of the doctrines of exorcisms of the spirits, and therein set forth the whole of hell, with the names and surnames of its 572 princes of devils. One would like to know how this learned doctor arrived at his knowledge of the infernal regions and its rulers so accurately. Strangely enough, this same man, at a later period, changed his views on the subject, would have nothing to do with witchcraft, and argued that all witches were melancholy persons, who only fancied to themselves that they had formed a compact with the Devil, and seemed to him more worthy of pity than of punishment. He wrote a book backing up this opinion in 1590, but was himself decried by other writers, as the worst of all wizards.

It was supposed that if the afflicted could say the Apostolic Creed, the three Articles, and repeat a few texts of Scripture, having immediate reference to the work of redemption, they could not be possessed, forasmuch as "no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

Therefore, when a priest was called in to cast out the devil possessing the bewitched one, he first prayed, and then called upon the sick person to repeat the Belief. If this latter were really possessed, most horrible contortions would follow, the limbs would be convulsed so that four men could scarcely hold the patient down in bed, the teeth would be gnashed, the eyes turned up, and frightful howls and barks would proceed from the victim, so that at times the parents and friends would beseech the priest to go away, as it was evident Satan, perceiving a servant of Christ had come, only plagued and tormented the bewitched one ten times more.

Witches were supposed to be able to bewitch and unbewitch cattle at their pleasure, and if they had a grudge against anyone they could cause their cattle and sheep to die off without any apparent cause. When the cattle in a village were bewitched it was sometimes customary to send a pure virgin to pluck a few hairs out of the tail of any cow, when the beasts would recover. But it was a slightly hazardous adventure, for, if the experiment failed and the cattle grew worse it was at once conjectured that the maiden had not been as circumspect in her conduct as she

should have been, and had consequently lost the healing power she should have possessed.

Witches were generally supposed to have their powers curtailed at Christmastide, and to counteract their evil designs it was customary to resort to all kinds of expedients for ascertaining their whereabouts.

It was believed in Suabia that if any person would take the trouble to make a small milking-stool out of fir-wood, and on Christmas Eve look through the three holes made for its legs, into a church, he would see a number of witches sitting with inverted milk-pails on their heads. For what object they had donned such queer headdresses is not stated.

Witches were also said to be extremely fond of congregating on Christmas night at a cross road, where a corpse had passed, and there holding high revel. If a person happening to have some fern-seed in his pocket were near, he would be favoured with a view of their ghoulish pranks, the fern-seed rendering them visible to its possessor, it being remembered that witches had the power at will of rendering themselves invisible to ordinary mortal sight. One of the most popular charms in England, in olden times, against the mal-practices of witches during the merry-makings of Christmas, was the preservation of a piece of the Yule Log.

Even at the present day many of the peasantry in Sweden have such a fear of being molested at Christmas time that they take care to avoid all lonely and sequestered spots, showing how true it is that superstition dies hard.

Fern-seed, being under the keeping of the Devil, could only be obtained just before midnight at Christmas.

"The fearfull aboundinge," in his country of these detestable slaves of the "Deuill," and the "damnable opinions of two men, whereof the one called Scot, an Englishman, was not ashamed in public print to deny that there could be such a thing as Witchcraft, thereby maintaining the old error of the Sadducees, in denying of spirits," so moved the wrath of King James I. that he wrote his celebrated treatise on *Daemonologie* to demonstrate without doubt and to his own perfect satisfaction, that witches were a reality, and should be dealt with with the utmost rigour. He does not scruple to call the second man, a German physician Wierum, who dared to write an apology for them, a wizard

himself. In the King's own words his intentions were, "to prove two things; the one, that such divelish artes have been, and are. The other, what exact trial and severe punishment they merite." Indeed, His Majesty would spare neither man, woman nor child, were they proved to be witches. The *Daemonologie* is curious reading. The King was perfectly persuaded that these slaves of the Devil could suddenly cause to be brought to them "all kindes of daintie dishes by their familiar spirit. Since, as a thiefe, he delights to steale, and as a spirite, he can subtiltie and suddenlie inough transport the same." Likewise "the bringing wine out of a wall," which seems to have been commonly practised. Also, he asserted "that witches, by the power of their Master, could cure or cast on diseases."

The king learnedly discourses upon the differences between "Necromancers" and witches, the latter being only servants and slaves to the Devil, but the former are his masters and commanders. But he is careful to explain that they are not really his masters, he only obliging them in some minor things that he may better secure their souls "which is the onlie thing he hunteth for." He also explains the way in which witches went to their meetings. Occasionally they went as ordinary individuals, viz.: walked or rode, but more often they were conveyed by their familiar spirit either above the earth or above the sea swiftly to the place of meeting, and in this transporting they were invisible save to one another. In other cases, their bodies lying still as in an "extasy," their spirits were taken out and carried to such places. This form of journeying was most used when they were transported from one country to another. Another mode was, but in this the King owns he thinks they were deluded by Satan's wiles, that they were transformed into "the likenesse of a little beast or soule," that could pierce through any house or church, though all ordinary passages might be closed, through any chink which could admit air. The King gives as a reason why there were twenty witches to every wizard, that as the sex is frailer than man, so it was much easier for the Devil to entrap women into his snares than men.

He also explains how the master taught his dupes "to make pictures of waxe or clay, that by the roasting thereof, the persons that they beare the name of, may be continually melted or dried awaie by continuall sicknesse." To some he gave stones or

powders which would help to cure or cast on diseases, and to others he taught the use of "uncouth poysons." Satan appeared to his satellites under different forms according to their temperaments, to some appearing uncouth and devilish and to others in far more agreeable guise.

Occasionally the Devil took a dead body out of its grave and used it for this purpose.

It may not be amiss here to give the definition of witchcraft as defined by "Maister Reginald Scot," one of the two men who drew down King James's ire upon them by daring to disbelieve in it.

"Witchcraft is in truth a cousening art, wherein the name of God is abused, prophaned and blasphemed, and His power attributed to a vile creature. In estimation of the vulgar people, it is a supernaturall worke, contrived between a corporall old woman, and a spirituall divell. The maner thereof is so secret, mysticall, and strange, that to this daie there hath never been any credible witnes thereof. It is incomprehensible to the wise, learned or faithfull; a probable matter to children, fooles, melancholike persons and Papists. The trade is thought to be impious. The effect and end thereof to be sometimes evile, as when thereby man or beast, grasse, trees or corne etc. is hurt: sometimes good, as whereby sicke folkes are healed, theeves bewraied, and true men come to their goods, etc. The matter and instruments, wherewith it is accomplished, are words, charmes, signes, images, characters, etc.: the which words although any other creature doo pronounce in maner and forme as they doo, leaving out no circumstance requisite or usuall for that action; yet none is said to have the grace or gift to perform the matter, except she be a witch, and so taken, either by her own consent, or by others' imputation."

Reginald Scot too laughs at the idea of "he spirits and shee spirits, Tittie and Tiffin, Suckin and Pidgin, Liard and Robin," etc. He thinks that, "white spirits and blacke spirits, grale spirits, and red spirits, divell tode and divell lambe, divels cat and divels dam can not stand consonant with the word of God or true philosophie"; and most moderns will be inclined to agree with him rather than with the pedantic King James I.

Among the Nuremberg collection of torture instruments are some interesting relics pertaining to the days of witchcraft. There is a witches' Idol, a small carved wooden figure of the

devil with red eyes and horns, said to have been worshipped by them. Also a Witches' Tablet, a carving of the devil's head in wood, painted. This was worn by the witch on her way to be burnt at the stake. There is a Mandragora Root cut into the form of a man. This was a favourite device with witches to compass the death of an obnoxious person. A nail or needle driven into the mandragora caused a pain to shoot through the heart of the living man at the same moment, and nails and needles were driven into it until the person died. The mandrake was supposed to have the power of helping its owner to discover hidden treasure.

The witch-catching staves are very curious, there is one with the words, Jesus, Nazarenum, and Ave Maria, upon it. Under the iron point for prodding is a hook for catching hold. This is so arranged that when a witch was to be caught it was unnecessary to touch her, as in those days of superstition no man could lay his hand upon a witch for fear of all sorts of evil spells. Catching hold of her with this staff, protected as it was by the words Jesus, Nazarenum, and Ave Maria, was considered to have the effect of circumventing all her machinations.

There is a curious old print in this collection showing a man hung out in an iron cage, and a witch on a broomstick flying up to him with a letter in one of her hands.

Witches not only could turn themselves into the likeness of animals, they also had the power of turning others who might happen to displease them into the form of brutes.

There is a Polish story of a witch who made a girdle of human skin and laid it across the threshold of a door where a marriage-feast was being held. On the bridal pair stepping across this they were transformed into wolves. Three years after the witch sought them out, and cast over them dresses of fur with the hair turned outward, whereupon they recovered their human forms. Unfortunately, however, the dress cast over the bridegroom proved too scanty, and did not extend over his tail, so that, when he was restored to his former condition, he still retained his wolf's tail, and owing to this misfortune his descendants inherited this unwished-for ornament, a lasting evidence of the witch's power and spite.

In France the belief in "lycanthropy" was universal, all classes being fully imbued with the idea that witches assumed at will

the wolfish form in order to work mischief by ravaging flocks of sheep. Many persons were executed for this imaginary crime.

Everybody who has read the "Ingoldsby Legends" knows the account of the Dead Man's Hand, but it is not so generally known that witches were in the habit of using a dead hand in their nefarious proceedings; they would place it inside the intended victim's door and thereby diseases were induced. It was likewise used to find out treasures; no bolt or lock could withstand its influence, and no human being could resist the sleep or lethargy that its presence caused.

The way the Hand of Glory was prepared was the following: It was necessary that it should be the hand of a man who was hanged for murder, when this was procured it was wrapped in a piece of winding-sheet, drawing it tight, so as to squeeze out the little blood that might remain; then it was placed in an earthenware vessel with saltpetre, salt and long pepper all finely powdered. It was allowed to remain in this pickle for a fortnight till it was well dried, afterwards it was exposed in the sun till completely parched, or, if the sun were not powerful enough, it was dried in an oven heated with vervain and fern. Next a candle was made with the fat of a hanged man, virgin-wax and Lapland sesame, this candle was put into the hand of glory and lighted when wanted to be used.

It is horrible to think of the thousands who perished before the general mania terminated. During the short space of three months 500 witches were burned in Geneva. In Como, 1,000 perished in a year. More than 100,000 were executed in Germany, and like numbers in other countries.

Strange, indeed does it seem that all this prejudice, imposture and cruelty, should have received the solemn sanction of the most learned and devout men; kings, popes, legislators, judges, clergymen of every degree, and private citizens of every quality and profession, alike believed in it.

The mean, vulgar and degrading folly, while it lasted, was terribly complete.

A. M. JUDD.

In the best of all possible Worlds.

I.

May 14th.

FROM the large, airy garret of a house at Dulwich two dormers looked down over a rich garden-world of flowering fruit-trees, lilac, and laburnum, and were open towards the westering sun. Inside the garret, a dining-table in reduced circumstances, four cane chairs, and the whole of the uncarpeted floor were so littered with shreds of muslin, silk, and ribbon that it looked as though some one had been petulantly disappointed of travestying the forms and colours of the blossoming out-of-doors. But this first impression would be contradicted by a second, for in the centre of the floor, amid a sacred enclosure of snowy paper, a towering female form, arrayed in a white diaphanous and shimmering robe of the very textures which in snippets bestrewed the room, was being ecstatically worshipped by kneeling maidens. But oh, horror! this daughter of the gods is headless, she is little more than a torso, she is . . . in short, she is a wicker dress-stand, and the trailing gown that looks so shapely over her creaking limbs is for the marriage of Miss Constance Burn, one of the two sisters who, with needle and cotton in one hand and a roll of sash-ribbon in the other, are giving finishing touches of bows and streamers to this queen of the *trousseau*, the wedding-gown.

It is a known fact that all men expect their womenkind to dress with the maximum of freshness and good fit on the minimum of expense, that they are deaf adders to the details and average cost both of materials and making, and that no father ever did or ever will look upon the most modest estimate for his daughters' wedding-clothes as anything but a mysterious and outrageous engulfment of good money. It is the mother who throws herself into the breach on occasions such as these and, like all true women, rapidly catching the contagion of the dress-maker's stimulating talk about the various articles that are absolutely indispensable, thoroughly enjoys her share in the un-

usual clothes excitement. But Constance Burn's mother had died while her daughters were at school, so that there was no wife to coax and curtain-lecture "Papa" into rising to the occasion just for once, and signing his name handsomely to as many cheques as Madame Modes or Robes et Cie. chose to make requisition for. The wedding-dress is always the peculiar vantage-ground of these well-known firms, and Constance Burn, with the sum of £50, delivered in five monthly instalments, at her disposal, had determined to buy the best of materials and then make everything up at home with the aid of a kind elder sister's cunning invention and deft fingers. Both Honoria and Constance had always been accustomed to make their gowns and trim their hats, and, if a girl only knows how, what can equal the bliss of planning and stitching her own bridal dress? The "smart" young woman goes to her *modiste* and the "arrangement in" white satin is brought carelessly in, across the arm of Madame's fitter, for a single trying-on, from an unknown workroom full of "skirt-hands." What poetry can cling round such a gown? It is as unfamiliar and unloved as is often the man on whose account it is to be worn, who will perhaps, as a part of her life, after a few parties, be equally lightly cast aside by the bride. Scent is said to be the most potent of the senses in association, but almost every woman must have found that the taking up again of certain needlework brings the keenest renewal of the feelings and meditations that were uppermost when last she sat at it. In with their sewing women put their cares, their longings, and their sadness. If there is something mystical and sacred about a virgin on the threshold of marriage, who shall deny that those white lengths of her train, when she herself has bent over and manipulated each inch of every hem and seam, have become depositories of the hope and triumph of her love? Constance Burn's "wedding providing" was to be not a mere *trousseau* but a colonial outfit as well. This made serviceableness its chief requisite and at the same time gave it a somewhat solemn and monumental character.

Long and hard the bride-to-be had toiled at her labour of love, and it was with sighs of relief that she and Honoria, who worked equally patiently for no reward, saw the door open and the maid enter with the tea-things.

"Finished, hurrah!" cried Constance, rising from her much-

enduring knees; "now I think we've fairly earned that hot buttered toast."

"I have just one more seam of the tweed skirt to machine, so don't pour out my tea for a minute or two," remarked her sister.

"Honor, I absolutely forbid you to do another stitch of anything till after tea," returned the bride-elect, and then, going behind her sister's chair and impulsively surrounding her with her arms, she murmured:

"It's so good of you, Honor dear, to do all this for me."

"Nonsense, child," laughed Honor, who knew that the reserved and shy Constance could hardly have spoken in so moved a tone if she had not stood where her face was out of sight, "You've waited long enough for your happiness, and it's only right that every one should do what they can now to help you off with the due flourish and *frou-frou* of furbelows."

"You alliterative person, you'd do in an Anglo-Saxon poem!" laughed Constance, moving her chair to the window so as to face the measureless gold of the sunset.

Constance was a great laugher in these latter days. It was not that more amusing things happened than formerly, but it was the lightness of her heart making her feel always ready for merriment. Hers was not an easily expressive nature. It was not in her to speak about the inner life which she had so long been leading with thoughts of her absent lover. These thoughts were the life of her life. Except that she moved mechanically and submissively through outward circumstances, she would hardly have considered that for her their small events existed. At any rate, a world-wide difference in reality, value, and meaning separated them from the life of love within her heart. To misanthropic persons this state of mind may seem the very essence of egoism, but it is only love's necessity. When a woman begins to love with the love of her life-time she ceases to grow as a young plant and becomes a bine, joyfully uprooting her former individuality to twine it round her lover's, and no longer valuing anything about herself except as a means to his aggrandisement. This process finds its natural fulfilment and destiny in marriage, and that is why the relatives of girls who have been long engaged call them "so selfish" and "so indifferent about everything," failing to see that it is only the natural

development of woman which is being arrested before its beneficent period sets in.

The waiting time of Constance Burn was so nearly over that it seemed to her almost impossibly strange that she could be within near and actual reach of what her whole life had for so long been spiring up flame-like to attain. For seven years she had been engaged to Augustine Moncrieff. The first three of these years he had served for his beloved in a Government office, during which term promotion showed no first flutter of its wing from the east, nor from the west, nor from the north. The only remaining "airt" was the south, and to forestall it in its probable intention of "blawing" no luck his way, the young Scotchman imitated the action of Mahomed with regard to the mountain, threw up his little accumulation of creditable record in the Civil Service, and faring southward to bombard Fortune in her latest quarter, he transported to the Cape himself and his stock in trade, the legal knowledge of a barrister who had never been able to afford to play the waiting game at home. The great boom in the Witwaterstrand Gold Fields was just then attracting its multitudes, and Austin joined that mixed and motley crowd. But he had better reasons than common gold fever for fixing upon Johannesburg. His grandmother was Dutch and one of his aunts had married a leading member of the Transvaal Legislative Council. Half a dozen good introductions often do more for a man's start in life than as many hundred pounds, and this Austin Moncrieff was soon to find. Johannesburg was still comparatively virgin soil, a fortuitous concourse of prospectors and shanties. It was probably lucky for Austin that he began his career there with but little money in his pocket and brains that had the gift of ready adjustment to new conditions, brains, too, that would not easily be turned by the genius of puff and "promoting." Naturally, a Scot prospers upon the earth where any other man would fail. So it came to pass that when time brought round the bursting of the bubble of fraudulent companies and phantom gold, and many men were cursing and a few cutting their throats, Austin, thanks to a little nepotism, certainly, but also thanks to his exceptional facilities for acquiring the "high" and the kitchen Dutch and to his quick mastery of the details of Boer and mining law, found himself in possession of a "payable reef" of his own in the shape of a better practice than any other

barrister in Johannesburg, besides an official appointment, distantly resembling that of Counsel to the Speaker in England, under the South African Republic. It was a reef which he was admirably fitted to work, and, little by little, what with carrying through several important projected-railway cases, perpetually stirring up the Sanitary Board, and making cheaper transport; cheaper labour, and the two years' residence franchise his political objects, he bade fair to become not only an enthusiast upon the future of Johannesburg, but also one of the foremost Britishers in the place. Nowhere, Austin found, like a new township for doing justice to whatever grit a man possesses. Perhaps he had never before had a fair chance of proving that brains, *with* character, weigh heavier than anything that goes into the scale. Clearly his future would for some years to come lie in South Africa, and blended with his that of the girl who loved him. It was the dear thought of her that had made him succeed. She was the motive-power inspired by which, he, like her at home, had bated no jot of heart or hope through the years of solitary exile. Constance was twenty-nine and her lover thirty-three, facts which I cannot suppress and dare not further delay to tell, though I greatly fear my story will at this point be laid down by all readers under twenty, by all the charming, insolent young maidens who think that a man is middle-aged at thirty, and that if he is not bald he ought to be, and regard a woman over twenty-five as quite on the shelf. What have such old *things* to do with love? Let us see.

When at twenty-two Constance had entered into her engagement, it had been considered a wretched affair by her friends, and she marvelled that she had not to assert her determination to have Austin far more vigorously than she had. Often since, she had half envied acquaintances of whom the word went that their only way into marriage had been by running away. If her father had forbidden his house and the hope of his daughter to Austin Moncrieff, she might have justified herself in running off with him, and then so many years of precious youth would not have been worn away in the unsettled, unfruitful state of a protracted engagement. There was something in that humdrum, languid, unsatisfactory condition peculiarly galling to Constance's proud heart, and that was one reason why she often fancied she longed

that years ago she could have proved her love in the eyes of the world by leaping down the abyss of marriage in the flaming chariot of elopement. But, in reality, Constance so craved the affection of all her immediate belongings that she could never have practically borne to distress or alienate her father whom half unconsciously she loved dearly and whose approval was of real importance to her. Mr. Burn, who was a Fellow of his College in the days when married Fellows were not, had married—for love—and become a schoolmaster. The death of his wife had told greatly upon his never robust health, so much so that he had to break up his school. He then settled at Dulwich, and ended by accepting a classical mastership in the College there. To himself, his life appeared a series of disappointments: he did not perceive that he had always asked too much of it. He had at bottom the same eager desire for happiness as his younger daughter, only he had sought it chiefly in direct self-gratification and she was looking for it through another's love. At sixty-five and twenty-nine, neither of them was really grown up, for neither had got rid of the impossible demands of childhood and its pathetic vulnerableness. They were the same metal run into different grooves, hence they never agreed together very well. Perhaps Mr. Burn's subterraneous reason for consenting to, no, acknowledging, his daughter's engagement (for the countenance he gave it was too negative for consent), had been that a poor engagement meant a long keeping of his daughter at home. Honoria had for years been practically detached from the household by having taken up the profession of nursing. By skill and devotion she had attained to being head nurse of a hospital in a large northern town but was now taking three months' rest till her sister's departure for South Africa. Meanwhile, she was looking out for a hospital matronship. She was a personable woman whom the troubled delights of love seemed never to have visited, whose fated M.D. or M.R.C.S. had at all events not at present hove in sight. Her hair already grizzling, though she was barely thirty-four, one could have fancied her a Dean's lady, if the dignified amenities of a Close could ever have absorbed her untiring energies. One would have called her a marked contrast to her sister, and without romance or sentiment of any kind, though perhaps one might have modified this opinion upon hearing her sing. Hers was

one of those touching contraltos which pour out notes so noble and so generous that one cannot choose but credit the singer with the *elan* of the song. Honoria's voice was a great artistic faculty, chiefly because it seemed to lift a curtain from a character which but for that might have been set down as terribly brisk and matter-of-fact, the typical lady nurse's. It supplied her with what every one needs—a means of expressing latent sympathy and tenderness. The voice had come from the mother's side; Constance, like her father, was extremely susceptible to music's vague, emotional exaltation, but she had no such gift; indeed, when she was very happy and ventured to hum Honoria's songs, the humming, as Honoria told her, was usually flat. Constance's special grace lay in her ways and movements, in the sound of every word she uttered, and in the superlative pleasantness of her sunny smiles. She was not exactly pretty, sometimes she looked almost plain, but there was about her that rare kind of attractiveness that goes for more than beauty of features or complexion, making her deeply envied by girls who were actually prettier than herself. She was such a person as, had she belonged to a Court, would have set fashions, for everything she wore seemed to gain distinction by her wearing it. Constance had fought a hard battle to wrest from her father the final sanction to her marriage. Austin had discharged from a distance his quiverful of sound arguments why they should be wedded without further delay, a comparatively easy matter of statements and accounts, but it was Constance who had to struggle day by day against parental fondness masked as parental prudence. For the young "advoket's" figures were unassailable, and painful as was the alternative from the father's point of view—not only losing a daughter but losing her to the world's far end—there was no valid reason against her going. So Austin was expected to be in England in a few days and Constance was blissfully busy over her marriage equipment.

Let us return to her where she was sitting at the window, with her tea-cup beside her on the sill, dreamily looking out at the lights of the western sky and thinking with delight that to-night her Austin was considerably more than three parts of his way across the ocean, and now, after four long, dull years, only half a week off her lips, her arms, her breast. Such reverie was

enough to hold her rapt and silent, and she put her hand on her heart, as she had often done before, to feel its pulse hasten with her joyful thoughts. She looked like Veronese's Saint Helena as she leant against the casement, the light zephyr fanning her pale forehead and stirring the low-growing softness of her dark red hair. The yellow sundown was fading into watery whiteness this May evening, previous to being muffled in the advancing slate-colour of the cloud curtains. Away from the lines of light, the garden-trees and thickets were beginning to lose their brilliancy and the sharp outline of their tangled boughs was becoming blurred by twilight, but the air that came in at the windows was still warm and balmy and seemed to Constance to be laden with the delicious message of the spring. It lay on her as all this May it had lain, like an ecstatic enchantment, and now, turning to Honoria, who was leaning back in an ancient nursery rocking-chair gathering up yards of pink *crêpe* into a frill, she said :

"Isn't it mysterious how the spring makes one long for what one only wishes for at other times? That's why I have always hated the spring ever since I have been engaged till this year, and now I feel as if it is the one and only season for marrying. I'm so glad I haven't to be married in the autumn or in the dead, dark winter."

"Shakspeare was right, then, in calling spring time the only pretty ring time?" smiled Honoria.

"Oh, quite," answered Constance, thinking less of what Shakspeare or any one else was pleased to say about love than of what she herself felt about it. "Honoriam, I don't believe I *could* have waited any longer for Austin. I believe I should have died of famine if God had not given him back to me this year. Do you know, I had always in my heart of hearts fixed this year as our wedding year, and begged God not to let us wait any longer. Of course I never said so to any one before, because I was always hoping we could be married earlier, and then I knew if once father got it into his head that Austin and I had thought this year, he would never have let me go a moment sooner. But I don't believe God could have been so cruel as to let us wait longer than this year. I don't believe he could, Honoriam, not after I had so prayed and prayed to Him, and tried so hard to be patient and please Him."

"I think one ought not to feel quite like that, though," said Honoria. "It seems too like demanding of God to grant our prayer, like saying to a fetich, 'I will worship you if you will give me such a thing in a fixed time.' After all, prayer is not a mere mechanical invention for getting what we want in life."

"Oh, but think how long we've waited, and how moderate our wishes were, after all. It seemed so little for God. Don't you think everybody has a right to be happy, Honoria?"

"Well, I think it's right to be happy," replied Honoria thoughtfully. "That's a different thing, I know, but somehow I can't bear to hear any one, even you, dear child, who have been so brave and sweet these trying years since Austin left, speak so daringly about happiness. Perhaps it may look a little like sour grapes from me to you, but truly it's a sincere feeling. I scarcely know how to explain just what I mean, and you know I'm no preacher. I daresay Austin would tell me my feeling is only a bit of paganism peeping out, or only thinly Christianised, for it's somewhat the sentiment that made the Roman generals wish to hear their soldiers shout calumnies against them at their triumphs so that things should not go too arrogantly."

But something from the under-world of Constance's nature, from the intimate life she led alone with the undesecrated ark of her love, gave the lie to Honoria's words. God, so Constance felt rather than argued to herself, for a woman's feelings are her true thoughts, God must have meant to develop her up to the best of which she was capable, and what could she be, what could God make of her without Austin, without her happiness, the very reason for her living? Nothing or worse than nothing. The idea was absurd and she dismissed it. She felt that her love was valid against all the earth's words, except that unthinkable one of a diminution in Austin's. But she could not tell Honoria all this, she would not comprehend her. Austin alone would comprehend, as he always did everything about her almost before she told him. Exquisite knowledge for the proud, heart-hungry girl that her lover, and he alone, knew her just as she was, had proved all her tempers and her faults, and loved her through, and with, and despite, and—had he not told her?—for them all. As it was, Honoria was a little hurt by the spoken revelations of Constance's absorbing affection for Austin of which these last two moons of unceasing excitement had, during the

hours of companionship over the wedding-clothes, made her the confidant. Not that there was a trace in Honoria of the subacid tone or the Mrs. Gumidge manner so often accorded by the sister who is not going to have all the fun and *éclat* of marrying to the sister who is. She was only hurt because almost every word was new. All these years no one had imagined that Constance's love had swallowed up her life to anything like the ravenous extent it had, and it had been almost an endeavour on her part to deceive them. It seemed to her that only by detaching Austin from every one but herself and isolating the relations between her being and his, could she have built up the beautiful cathedral where in darkness she yearned and worshipped. Inscrutableness is the greatest charm of girlhood, and a maiden's love what is it in any case but an enigma, a divinely human mystery, especially to herself and to her lover? But with Constance that which is common to all had become the peculiar characteristic, her wild, great heart was under lock and key to all but Austin, and she hugged as her chief joy that of knowing that he alone knew her.

She had been poring over the last precious epistle but one from over-seas, when for manners' sake she looked up from that blissful occupation—with which she refreshed herself at the end of every hour of her work—and remarked to Honoria :

"How odd it will seem only having two seasons at J. instead of four." (They called it 'J' because latterly their father had begged for a little less Johannesburg in the talk at meals, to him it was an affronting word, and to Constance even it was a long one when needed about fifty times daily.) "I expect I shall miss the trees at first."

"Are there no trees?" asked Honoria.

"Why you know I've often told you they are not grown up yet," said Constance reproachfully. "Didn't I read you that bit out of Austin's letter? He puts it so amusingly, at least I think so: Here's what he says . . . 'The leaves never fall here, 'cos why there are no trees from which they could fall; the gold scrip has fallen considerably lately, but the only green things about that are the flats that bought it, many of them are less verdant now, but also mostly minus their money, some of them have large overdrafts at the banks, but those are not marketable commodities. I have not a tickie—as I officially informed Mr.

Burn last month—in scrip, you see I know too much; the place is all right, there is plenty of gold and it will pay pretty well. How I long '—oh, that's all."

They both laughed at the abruptness of Constance's conclusion. Well Honoria knew that when her sister emigrated four years back from the room where they had always slept together when she was at home to a tiny one upstairs, it was for none of the ostensible reasons alleged, but in order that she might never lose a single night's devouring of her sacred documents, and sleeping with her head upon them afterwards.

"If I wake up in the dark now," said Constance, "it is so lovely to think that every moment of night or day Austin is moving towards me. I love to feel that the steamer never stops all night long, and that while he's asleep he's still coming. I always dream of the *Raymond Palace* cutting its way through the sea and foaming along towards England. Oh, I love that dear ship. I feel as if it were Austin's horse. Whenever I shut my eyes I can see what's going on there just as if I were on it myself. I mean to ask Austin when he gets here whether he wasn't seeing and saying certain things exactly as I imagined him to be at different times. I know now I have always been a *clairvoyante* where Austin was concerned. Don't you remember two years ago when he broke his collar-bone at polo, I felt that something was going to happen all the time before we heard? I remember counting back to the day he was thrown, and finding that my sense of calamity dated from the very same afternoon. I know I should feel anything that happened to him wherever he might be. I daresay the learned will be finding out before long that the sympathetic identicalness of two people has more electricity in it than space can counteract, and then you'll all believe me when you hear it called 'electricity.'"

"Anyhow we shan't accept Constance Moncrieff *née* Burn as an unprejudiced scientific investigator," said Honoria, "you're just a little bundle of prepossessions and private interpretations, my dear."

"I shan't be much longer. As soon as I'm married I mean to become the most judicially-minded woman in South Africa. You see I intend to qualify for a Judge's wife. But, as you put the idea into my head, I may as well confess to you my pet 'private interpretation.' You know I love 'O rest in the Lord'

better than anything else you sing, because I made the words of it the motto of our engagement. Well, I don't think I ever told you that I always translate 'wait patiently for *him*' as meaning Austin himself, and in that way it seems to come out with so much more force, that *God* 'shall give' me him who is my 'heart's desire.'"

Rarely had Constance spoken so fully from the depths of her inward life. As Honoria, surprised by the tremulous, earnest tone into glancing at her, observed the humid darkness of her eyes and the glowing colour that was not a blush, she felt how habitual and intimate had become to her sister the words of Mendelssohn's divine air with the sense she read into them. There was something extraordinary, something curiously beyond Honoria's estimates in these glimpses she had been given lately of Constance's hidden character. It was the revelation of a being at once simple and unfathomable—most oddly child-like in her talk of the Creator, most passionately woman-like in her absorption in one human creature. Such absorption is in itself full of pathos, and Honoria, thinking of the tremendous claims of such natures, said a trembling "Amen" to her sister's prayer for happiness.

From these serious thoughts the two were aroused by the maid entering to clear away the tea-things, and "your Papa says, Miss, as how he should be glad to look at Miss Constance's wedding-dress, if it's finished enough for him to see it."

The expression of a desire to see her dress was an unexpected piece of graciousness on her father's part.

"Ask him to come up directly," cried Constance, "it's quite finished, and there's just light enough before dinner."

Some ten minutes later, fully nine after Constance expected him, Mr. Burn creaked up the stairs. The dress had been set in the most advantageous position, and Constance slowly twirled the headless lady round to display its full elegance.

"Doesn't it look pretty?" and "You see the train is lined with silk," ejaculated the girls.

"And I shall wear white satin shoes, and a wreath of real orange-blossoms, and Austin's mother's Brussels veil over all."

"What, the shoes on your head?" asked Mr. Burn, somewhat unbending in presence of Constance's gay ways.

"No, the wreath round my feet, of course," laughed Constance.

"Well, well, you're a foolish girl to leave your poor old father, and go and live in a digger's camp at the other end of the world."

"Papa, how often I've told you it's not a digger's 'camp,' it's a great big town with splendid club-houses and all the appendages of civilisation."

"Well, come down and eat your dinners," said Mr. Burn, who had always refused to modify his red-shirt, revolver, and scum-of-the-earth notions of a mining community, and still looked upon Austin Moncrieff as culpably a "rolling stone" in having thrown over English penury for the doubtful advantages of so inartistic a bohemianism. Poor old scholar; life had always treated him grudgingly, he thought, and it was hard now that his daughter should take such delight in the thought of leaving him. Mr. Burn was not a sympathetic man, and he had never cultivated the art of considering things from standpoints other than his own.

After dinner, Honoria sang, as her custom was, without "notes," passing by imaginative associations from each melody to the next, and sliding one into another by skilfully piecing together their accompaniments, till she came at last to Constance's.

"O rest in the Lord,"

sang the rich, thrush-like voice.

"Wait patiently for *him*."

The peculiar expressiveness of her G Major sweetly acknowledged Constance's interpretation.

"And He shall give thee thy heart's desires."

With parted lips and far-away look Constance listened. Never had the lofty words sounded so personal to herself as now that Honoria knew how she applied them; and at the end of the music she went up to her sister and gave her a soft kiss that spoke a world of thanks.

That night, as Constance went upstairs to bed, and as, later, she moved about her little room and folded her clothes, over and over again she found herself humming under her breath,

"Wait patiently for *him*,
And He shall give thee thy heart's desire,
And He shall give thee thy" . . . *Austin Moncrieff.*

II.

May 14th.

THE *Raymond Palace* was a good-going steamer and she had never made better progress than on this passage between Capetown and London. She was now doing over seventeen knots an hour, and Madeira was just left behind. Above a hundred first-class passengers were on board, and no man among them was more popular than the clever Scotch barrister, Austin Moncrieff. There was a simple directness about all he said and did that had always made honest people like him, and to be in his company now was to gain a definite stimulus from his resoluteness and ease. Success had unmistakably marked him for its own, and on the whole, few grudged him the rewards he had worked so industriously to earn. It was often said in Johannesburg that wherever you tapped Moncrieff he rang true. Certainly he possessed among his gifts one great one, that of commanding esteem and personal liking.

None but weak men talk to acquaintances about their private hopes and prospects, and Austin Moncrieff had taken few people into his confidence as to the object of this expedition of his to England. But wherever a wedding is in the air, more gets known than is ever told, and there were not many first-class ladies on board the *Raymond* who did not frequently discuss—and in several cases secretly envy—the girl who would so soon be outward-bound with her bridegroom.

On this particular afternoon Austin was seated on his deck-chair and, for a wonder, he was suffered to sit alone. He had found that the only thing to do when he wished to keep himself from being buttonholed or bored by every chance ocean acquaintance was to hold up stonily before his eyes some particularly "French" yellow-back. As a matter of fact he did not read one line, the Parisian garbage never appeared so vapid or so blasphemous as now when he was luxuriating in sea dreams of his own Constance. All round him was spread the infinite finite of the sea, violet or blue as it lay under clouds or open spaces of sky, and he thought of the happy times to be when Constance would be at his side and in the evenings, with her

dear hand in his, they would together watch the nightly phosphorescence of the waters. Then he went on to wonder whether Constance would grow to like Johannesburg for a few necessary years, or whether the bitter, bare monotony of the veldt stretching away towards the interminable desert, and the sense of that great dark Continent always behind her would imaginatively distress and weigh heavily on her as he knew they had done on many people.

But profitless dejection being the most unusual of moods with Austin, he quickly shook it off now to consider more practical issues. With the generality of men the thought of their work follows hard upon the thought of their love and now Austin began to ruminate the last case he had on hand before he left the Transvaal. It was a peculiar one and would probably occupy him for some time to come. There had been a big robbery in the house of an important member of the Volksraad, and a bag of diamonds, besides a good deal of gold, had been taken. The cook-man's brothers, two Kafirs, who increased their store of wives and oxen in an unexplained way very soon after, were suspected of having been active parties in the robbery. The State prosecuted and they were sentenced to imprisonment with many stripes. Now Austin Moncrieff, who was counsel for the prosecution, had all along considered the Kafir boys as mere instruments in the hands of some clever and 'civilised' person unknown, and indeed the evidence of their having themselves sold the diamonds was weak in the extreme. However, nobody else was forthcoming till after they were condemned and the trial was perforce over, and then, just as he was arranging to start for England, Austin had come upon a clue. Furthermore, ten days before he left, he had himself seen, in Johannesburg, the man whom he was beginning to suspect of the crime, a mongrel Hollander who had been in South Africa about three years and was already known as a black sheep. In the interval before the sailing of the *Raymond Palace*, Austin found several opportunities of instituting important inquiries. These led to evidence that only needed to be duly developed and pieced together to be enough to convict the Hollander, Opfdorp, of this and several other robberies. There was a chain of more or less imbrued persons, ending with an "I. D. B." (Illicit Diamond Buyer) at Kimberley, and though it was tiresome that things must stand over till his

return, this sensational solution of a much talked of case, Austin fully determined, should be the first thing his hand should find to do when he was back in eight weeks' time. As long as a man stays in South Africa he can be found, and Austin knew no reason why Opfdorp, unless he believed himself to be the object of suspicion, should leave the country. On the other hand, he fancied that the Hollander had vanished somewhat abruptly when he looked at him that day in Commissioner Street, so he was careful not to stir the slime too much at present lest the principal parties should take alarm and decamp before he could apprehend them.

Austin's legal intellect was still in the enjoyment of turning over the intricate evidence he possessed against Opfdorp and he was even arranging his cross-examinations of the various witnesses, when it was time to go down to the saloon for dinner.

Little did Austin Moncrieff guess that the very man who, aware of his suspicions, had fled from him at Johannesburg, had come down by the Durban route and, unknowing as unknown, had taken a third-class passage on board the *Raymond Palace* in order to leave danger and South Africa behind. The steamer had not left Cape Town three days before the escaping criminal had from the forward end seen the one man who held his condemnation in his hands. Without disguises, in the narrow limits of this floating prison, Opfdorp could scarcely expect to go the whole voyage unrecognised, and hour by hour the belief grew upon him that he was trapped, that from any port where the steamship called a telegram might be dispatched to Pretoria, the reply to which would suffice to arrest him when he landed on English shores. Mingled terror and resentment grew in the mind of the skulking man till they completely possessed him. After the first hour of freezing realisation of his position it never once occurred to him that his juxtaposition with Moncrieff might be the result of an accident, that he might have been unseen hitherto, and might, by careful stratagems, remain unseen till the danger was past. Opfdorp's ruling passion was greed of money, and after three years of successfully pursuing the critical career of thief and receiver, now, when his clothing was lined and heavy with his gains, the prospect of being convicted and having to part with all he had taken was hell itself to him. Behind the narrow forehead of the morose and malignant man the deter-

mination to risk all sooner than be tamely caught grew up side by side with a furious detestation of Moncrieff, so that the idea of wreaking personal revenge on him preyed on Opfdorp till it came to appear a luxury and self-indulgence that he could on no account give up. Such an idea, so formed, so nurtured, is from its very birth almost a scheme, at all events it very soon expands into one, and thus it seemed to Opfdorp that there was but one course open to him and that was to watch his opportunity, the opportunity which he must leave some dark night to develop. The sea tells no tales and, once Moncrieff safely at the bottom, of it, there was no living creature who, to Opfdorp's knowledge, held the chain of evidence that could convict him. If circumstances would only be favourable, the deadly business might be effected without raising the slightest suspicion. At the rate at which they were going it would be next to impossible for the engines to back quick enough to pick up a drowning man, even if his cry for help were heard above the noise of the screw—always supposing that the deed could be done out of sight and hearing of the deck watch. The one thing that was indispensable was to get Moncrieff alone, and this on a full steamer could only happen by the rarest chance. So day by day the murderer waited and watched and withered in impatience, and day by day the victim chatted and joked with the passengers and counted the hours that lay between him and his betrothed, and over the lovers and over the hater brooded all the while that which broods over all, the terrific Unexpected.

The same evening on which Austin Moncrieff had been wondering how Constance would take to Johannesburg the weather was almost sultry. It was a night on which to enjoy the quietude and briny freshness of the sea and he was the last passenger to think about turning in. The moon was making a bluish white counterfeit of day and where its glitter did not lie, the phosphorescence turned the water a wicked, changeable green. The sea was as calm as the traditional mill-pond and over it the vessel appeared to be simply sliding along on a perfectly even keel. Austin had strolled along the lower deck beyond the midships and was sitting, as unwived men will, upon the bar of the railing at the edge. He had been there only a few minutes when he suddenly observed a slice of darkness projecting itself from behind him across the moon-white boards beyond the

bulwark's band of shade. It was a man's shadow, and before Austin had time to inspect the stealthy phenomenon, it suddenly grew to full stature and stopped. Another instant, and the dastard who owned it had risen up in front of Austin and given him a foul blow backwards, destroying his slight balance on the rail. Taken unawares, Moncrieff for the fraction of a second reeled over space, then, succeeding in twisting one foot round the lower bar of the iron railing, with desperate might he clutched his assailant round the throat. There was nothing else he could grasp in time to regain his balance, and quick as lightning the thought flashed through his mind that his would-be murderer would pull back rather than fall into the water with him. But Opfdorp was taken by surprise, he was by far the lighter and weaker man of the two, and Moncrieff's powerful arms only dragged his body forwards. Further and further towards the edge he was slipping, slipping, for his foothold had quite given way and he felt himself powerless against the weight that was gradually drawing him over, the weight of the man who would not abandon his own last chance by letting go. For one eternal half-instant the two hung grappling together, staring with savage eyes into each other's faces, the next, and their movement was out of the power of either, all chance of retrieving their balance was gone. Moncrieff pitched heavily back, head downward, and his murderer, still in his grip, his face almost touching his own, went over simultaneously on the top of him. They might almost have been one body as together they made a blot on the phosphorescence and then dug a momentary black hole through it into the sea.

The entire struggle took place in less than a minute. So rapidly, so silently did it all happen that the watch who was just then pacing aft on the promenade deck, with the bridge and the whole erection of cabins and saloons between him and it, saw nothing and knew nothing of what had occurred. As Opfdorp had foreseen, the grinding of the screw and the rush of the water at the bows overpowered the noise of the falling body! And the steamer sped on in the night and the moonlit deck and the white painted railing showed no traces of the murder and sudden death to which they had been witnesses.

III.

May 17th.

UP to the time that Austin Moncrieff left England for Johannesburg he had occupied a modest sleeping-place on the fourth floor of the Westminster Palace Hotel, and in his last letters from South Africa he had asked Constance and her father to try to engage him the same room till his honeymoon began. As the days went on and the *Raymond Palace* became all but due at Plymouth, where Austin had promised to land and thence hasten on by train to London and Dulwich, Constance grew one nerve of anticipation and expectancy. Once she had counted the months to his return, now she had reduced her reckoning to hours, gleefully allowing a margin in case the South African packet should be a day or two behind time. Every night as she lay down in bed she said to herself, "It may be to-morrow," and though her father and Honoria constantly reminded her that it had been long ago settled that Austin should telegraph as soon as he stepped on shore, yet the eager girl kept rushing into the hall, fancying she recognised his own step outside, and then entreating her father to take her up to London every "next morning," in case Austin should have arrived at the Westminster Palace Hotel during the impracticable hours of night. What procrastinating, unenthusiastic dullards the old seem to the young, and what headstrong, selfish lunatics the young seem to the old! At last, by the evening of a day spent in plaguing and imploring, Mr. Burn was persuaded to go up to town with his daughter early the following morning, "if the weather proved favourable!" The first place they were to go to was Dean's Yard, in order to catch an old friend who was to be asked to officiate at the wedding, then they were to go to the hotel and secure Austin a room—or find him there—as, against all her father's arguments to the contrary, Constance persisted in thinking probable. After that they were to go to the Stores, to Mappin and Webb's, to Marshall and Snelgrove's—Constance had a list as long as her arm.

Honoria was just now in the thick of a correspondence relative to a particularly desirable hospital matronship, and as her credentials were unexceptionable and she had two friends among the selecting committee, the only question seemed to be whether she could stay over for the wedding without sacrificing the appointment. But she had hopes that an extra fortnight would be allowed her and this would just cover the wedding-day if the preparations were hurried on a little.

By five the next morning Constance drew up her blind and opened the window to its widest to admit the morning. There had been two or three of those days of damp and chilliness during which the year makes a great, unnoticed stride towards summer, and now the air was full of twitterings, and from somewhere deep down in the lilac trees came the full-throated warble of a thrush. And as Constance listened she put words to the song, and the bird seemed to be trilling

“—patiently for *him*.
And He shall give thee thy heart's desire.”

That, at all events, was the song of her own heart, and with it every other seemed in unison. Then for the hundredth time she began to picture what the first meeting with Austin would really be. Suppose he were at the Westminster Palace Hotel this morning and he came down to them in the public room, what would happen, what would he do? They strangers among strangers, he would give her one kiss, she knew, be the room as full as it might, and that kiss would tremble with the thousands to come afterwards. Then, as they walked from the room, he would hold her hand, and he would be with them all day and go home with them to dinner. Should she show him *the* dress or should he not be permitted to see that sacred garment till she rustled up the aisle to him in it on their marriage morning? She could not tell which she would do, it would depend on whether or not he urged her to show it to him.

As Mr. Burn sat opposite his daughter in the train that morning going up to Victoria, even he could not be blind to the new beauty that the bliss of crowned desires was working on her. Indeed, it seemed as if every one was more or less influenced by its magnetism, for, at the Dulwich station, the people standing about had all turned to gaze admiringly after her and now, in

the carriage, an oldish woman in shabby mourning kept furtively giving long looks at her happy face as though it were a cup that contained some reviving draught of encouragement and youthful hope.

For the moment, Mr. Burn almost forgot his private grievance and tribulation, the admirable charm and glow and thrill of his daughter so compelled from him the nearest approach of which he was capable towards sympathy with happiness in which he had no personal share. Alternately soft and animated were the dark eyes with the tender light that shone through them. Rosy red was the tingling flush of the cheeks, in one little month their lines seemed to have regained the bloomy roundness of which the last four years had deprived them. Once more Constance looked what years ago her father had called her, his Euphrasy, his little Eyebright, but now, he reflected, his no longer, and he sighed, with that special sigh that parents know.

When they reached Victoria, Mr. Burn and Constance had to change into the District Railway that would take them on to Westminster Bridge. Their compartment was empty, but at St. James's Park, two gentlemen entered, and one of them, who had just given away his morning paper to the guard, remarked to his companion, soon after they were seated :

"Extraordinary thing, those two men disappearing off the *Raymond Palace*."

"Very," replied the other, "and there is apparently no clue to any connection between them. Of course, if only Moncrieff or only the other man had been lost one would simply consider it one of the accidents that are bound to happen occasionally at sea. But the two going overboard on the same night and that in calm weather . . . h'm, it looks deuced like foul play on that foreigner's part."

There was no mistake about the words. Both speakers' voices were distinct above the grating of the train through the tunnel. Still, Constance, who had crimsoned at the words, *Raymond Palace*, felt she was dreaming. It was a horrible dream, a nightmare of the day. It had made her feel first on fire, then icy cold. It had turned her blood. One thing, and one only, she was acutely conscious of—she must dispel it. She tried to speak to the gentleman sitting opposite, but she found she could not utter a word. She had almost lost her father's

presence, at most she saw him through interminable vistas of mist, and she could not speak to him either. The world seemed empty but for her and the two speakers on the opposite side. In the lamp-lit darkness she saw them magnified, looming enormous. Their hats, the look of their hands, the shape of their scarves, were impressions that were being scorched into her brain. Meanwhile, Mr. Burn also had heard what passed and he, though in a different way from his daughter, had received its full significance.

He knew that something terrible had happened and was still in-store for them to hear, and his brains felt scattered. Yet some dim hope that perhaps Constance had not heard or would not comprehend struggled in him.

His one practical thought was to prevent her from hearing the stabbing news till he could get her home and prepare her mind, or, at least, till he could take counsel with Honoria. In another minute, the train stopped at the platform and, taking his daughter's hand, half shyly, half protectingly Mr. Burn helped her out of the carriage. Then she dropped his arm and in another moment she was at the news-stall. In dreadful crises of life people hear the cavernous sound of their own voices and wonder at themselves and at the things they are saying, and it was just in that way that Constance heard herself ask the boy at the stall for a morning paper. She was still in the dream, she felt, but at the stage when the waking consciousness is making a tremendous effort to shake off dreaming and be itself again. She laid down a penny, she took the newspaper. Mr. Burn shuddered to think of her reading her tragedy there on the station, near the ugly suggestiveness of the rails and the advancing engines. He looked at her, but there was that in her stricken face and set eyes that he dared not gainsay. All he could do was to prevent her making a scene on the platform by helping her up the stairs to a recess nearer the exit into the street, where she could read her paper undisturbed. There, then, they stood, reading together, and this is what they read :

"MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE ON BOARD A HOMEWARD-BOUND STEAMER.

"In another portion of our columns we report the arrival at Plymouth of the London and South African Packet Line's

s. *Raymond Palace*. A telegraphic dispatch from the captain of this vessel, dated Plymouth, informs the press that Mr. Augustine Moncrieff, a Scotch gentleman who had been in practice as an advocate in the Law Court at Johannesburg and was on his way to England, with a return ticket for the Cape, lost his life by falling into the ocean on the night of the 14th inst. The sad casualty was observed by no one on the steamer, but is believed to have occurred between 11 o'clock and midnight. On the same evening, a steerage passenger on the *Raymond Palace*, a German or Dutchman, entered in the ship's list under the name of Elias Smidt, also disappeared. It seems incredible that in exceptionally calm weather, as it was on the occasion of the disaster, two men should have been drowned on the same night at separate times without being observed by the look-out, but, at present, all inquiries as to a connection between the two deaths have been baffled. Mr. Moncrieff was aged thirty-three and up till nearly the time of his death was smoking with other passengers and apparently in excellent spirits. Great sympathy with the deceased's friends has been expressed on board. It does not appear that the unfortunate gentleman was liable to mental aberration."

Constance had to read the paragraph four or five times over before she could take in all its meaning, then she let the baleful paper fall to the ground. The apathy of her gesture, the rigidity of her attitude puzzled her father, but his more instant problem was what to do next. Constance was certainly not fit to face acquaintances, neither was she in a state to re-enter the train. She had learned the worst. What she needed now was half-an-hour's respite, some retreat where they could both rally their ideas quietly and confront their next action and the rest of the day. All at once, Mr. Burn thought of Westminster Abbey; there they would take refuge for awhile.

The wide road, backed by its famous towers, lay in blinding sunshine and looking like a photograph. The shops had their sun-blinds extended, the walkers cast decisive shadows. Constance and her father had to wait the cumbrous turning of a water-cart, while a flower-seller pestered them to buy her roses. Mr. Burn took hold of his poor girl and, almost supporting her round the waist, he steered a way among the traffic. Hot as was the day, poignant as was the shock she had just

sustained, the only feelings of which Constance was vividly aware were intense physical weakness and inconceivable cold, She was shivering all over, her teeth chattered, and her tired limbs seemed as if they could never drag her as far as across the road. It seemed dark, too, and, if it had not been for the help of her father's arm she would have stumbled and fallen; as it was, she groped her way and in time they reached the Abbey porch.

At first, everything inside looked to Constance curiously artificial and unsubstantial, and the grand old stones and monuments seemed made of gray pasteboard. Then, by degrees, the long-familiar stationariness of them all struck her misery into a new phase. Thus far, it had been principally physical, the brain had been numbed, but now the inchoate feelings began to mount upward and surged into thought. . . .

The *14th of May*—that very day which stood out in her memory because it was the day on which they had completed her wedding-dress. Her wedding-dress! The dress which she had so proudly fitted on and trailed about in before the glass, her heart upheld during the tedious needle-work by the sweet vanity of those intervals of looking at herself in it and imagining what he would say and how he would look when he saw her in it. Oh, it seemed impossible to believe that now she would never use it, that it was a thing from the sight of which she would shrink.

The *14th of May*—that very day on which she had told Honoria that she should feel instantly anything that was happening to him, on which she had boasted of her second sight concerning him. And, as nearly as she could guess, she must have been sleeping, dreaming a happy dream of him, when he Oh, the anguish of having felt nothing, known nothing, of having had no parting, no last look, no good-bye word.

And then only the full sense of her desolation swept over her as she realised the hopeless break-up of that mysterious identification of herself with him, that for seven years every pulsation of her brain had helped to build. Now she was alone, she who had never given a thought to herself except as a part of him. All these years she had been an idealist, building on the sand, vainly imagining that two lives may be absolutely fused, that a

double life, impregnable and indivisible, was the object and haven of being. And now, a vague, casual accident, a brutal, unthinking moment, had come, and pulverised, with one appalling blow, the very grounds of her existence. How cruel, how ironical, life was, how far larger and more lawless, or how far more mechanical, than she had believed. Was it malicious and sinister, or only deaf and blind? She felt broken on its huge wheel.

Then her thoughts returned to the details—how should she bear the silence at home, and the hard look of the gray, gray house, and the look of everything she knew, and the torturing summer, and the bleak brightness of the sunshine? And how could she endure the different parts of the day, and especially the sunsets and twilight, her old favourite times? How dull, how intolerably dull would be the centuries she would have to live with nothing to work for, and nothing to look forward to! Silent, ponderous years; already she felt them pressing upon her, so heavily, as though the dreariness and length of them were all condensed into these first few minutes.

She suddenly felt that she had nothing left to think of and it was when she was first conscious of this that she first touched the true materials of her wretchedness. There was not one thing in the world for her unconnected with him and with happy looking forward, and now there was nothingness, a blank, only the eternalisation without hope of the last four years which had been endurable just because of the hope at the end of them. Everything to go on just the same as ever except that one thing that gave life and joy to all the rest. That would be the supreme anguish to come.

And through it all the pang more sharp than all was the feeling that she had not yet felt the worst. And there came the thought that if he had been alive, he who could never bear to see her suffer, what would he not have undertaken, sacrificed, gone through, to spare her one tenth of this pain. The thought of it made her feel more than ever alone.

Thus far Constance's trouble had found no relief in tears. Except that her face was gray and the rims of her eyelids red and heavy, she betrayed no signs of unusual agitation. In her woe she did not part with her shyness, her reserve. It was indeed an extra element in it that she who had for so many years

been saving up all her emotion would now never find the outlet for which she had proudly waited. A great longing for sympathy, for "someone to speak to" seemed all at once to come over her, and yet she knew she had no right, no power to elicit sympathy. As impossible for her to obtain it as it would be to explain in an hour what seven years of love and her own temperament had between them made of her. No one but herself could know how great was the fall, since no one but herself had known how great was the structure.

All this while — this quarter of an hour, it might be — Constance had sat motionless under the lantern, her eyes fixed on that monument to the Duke of Argyll and Greenwich which stands so conspicuous at the bottom of the south transept. She was looking, but she was not seeing; since the first moment she had dropped upon the wooden form beside her father she had been unconscious of what was around her. In the same way, she heard nothing of the latter part of the morning service, which, with its peculiar mumbling sounds, had all the while been proceeding in the choir. The service was now over, but half-a-dozen choristers still remained for the anthem practice. Most of the people who had come in for the prayers had gone out again or were just going, but Mr. Burn decided to leave it to his daughter to make the first movement towards departure.

For the time being the Abbey seemed nearly empty save for themselves, the half-dozen choir-boys and their master, and two hobbling vergers who hung about at the entrances to the aisles. Suddenly Constance felt a strange tremor. The organ was playing very softly and an angelic voice, the matchless all but contralto of a boy of fourteen, was rising on the wings of the *aria* from *Elijah* :

"O rest in the Lord ;
Wait patiently for Him,
And "

* * * * *

Constance Burn rose staggering to her feet. Her movement was to flee from the church. But nature had borne too much and was in revolt. For a moment the girl stood swaying, then fell heavily along the seat.

The two vergers, seeing something unusual, made their best

haste forward, and between them and her father Constance was carried to the door. The unusual weight made the old men totter and go very slowly, and the shuffling sound of their feet, as it echoed down the north transept and was the only thing beside the soloist's voice to break the hush of the Abbey, seemed to those few who were present and marked it to be somehow an incongruous accompaniment to the vibrations of

"He shall give thee thy heart's desires."

F. MARY WILSON.

An Idyll of an Idol.

BY CHARLOTTE E. MORLAND & ALARICUS D'ELMARD.

IN a beautiful Island where all day long the sun pencils the dark green foliage with golden points, and the tiniest of shadows at the foot of men and things are as a reflection only of the intense blue of Heaven above ; where the birds are living gems, and the flowers soft and brilliant as Eastern silks, in the centre of a cool and shady grove was the sanctuary of a devoutly worshipped Divinity.

The temple was of cedar wood and ebony ; graceful pillars of brazen open work supported a fretted ceiling and the purple skies were its sole roofing, now illumining the shrine with brilliant sunlight, then, as the day fell suddenly, with soft radiant moonbeams and faint starlight.

And on her tabernacle, all overlaid with mother-of-pearl and precious stones, stood the sacred deity of the spot. She was an Idol of carved ivory, softened and mellowed by age, who seemed alive in her sweetness and her beauty. Her pose was majestic, and her dreamy, puzzled eyes smiled vaguely and enigmatically as though they would not speak of a thousand inscrutable thoughts.

The faithful came in crowds to kneel before her altar all day from morn to night. They brought long scrolls of prayers, and the ground was covered with the Papyrus they had written on ; their offerings were of spotted lambs, of many-hued birds, of curious and exquisite fruits, of beautiful pieces of coral, and of ivory, of ebony and of silver ; large plates of gold all heaped with emeralds and sapphires, with pearls and diamonds. And these they massed about the little Idol, at her feet, and round her tabernacle, till the sanctuary was full, and hardly space was left for vases of oil and delicate perfumes ; for the products of the earth and the delicious viands they also brought and they themselves, full of confidence in the power and the goodness of their divinity, they knelt before her throne and offered up

their sacrifices and implored her mercy, strong in their faith of being heard.

And the little Idol, always serene and calm, saw them all with her large still eyes, smiling vaguely and enigmatically as she looked down on rich and poor alike with smooth unclouded brows.

And before her rose the smoke of the sandalwood that her priests burnt constantly, and the blue, opalescent cloud from frankincense that was for ever being strewn on incandescent coals in thuribles of bronze.

And in the midst of the perfumed haze that enveloped her, as the priests beat on gongs of brass and chanted forth rude hymns of praise . . . the little Idol, always calm and smiling and beautiful, seemed to the faithful who thronged to her shrine, the perfect semblance of the Almighty God, the God ever-just and good, ever ready to grant their prayers and help their heart's longings.

And the faithful left the temple and went to their homes, and the priests carried away to the antechambers and recesses of the shrine, the manifold gifts that they had brought.

And when night fell, soft and beautiful as it ever is in this enchanted land, the little Idol of ivory was left alone in her gilded sanctuary.

About her the mists of incense still lingered, and the subtle, penetrating odour of the flowers wrapt her round in delicious fragrance respecting the repose of the slumbering god, as they floated on the still warm air.

But with her beautiful hands outstretched, her still, deep eyes smiling vaguely and enigmatically, her unclouded brows smooth and serene, the little Idol mused dreamily, and looked sad, oh so sad!

Sad, profoundly sad, she was. Notwithstanding all the offerings of her faithful people, their prayers, their rich gifts and their incense, there was something that she wanted—something that she missed.

And yet, her priests were zealous and eager in her service—it was to their advantage so to be . . . she ate none of the exquisite fruits and dainty dishes ; she cared nothing for the perfumes and the presents and never glanced at the gold and jewels that were brought her.

And yet, the number of the faithful was countless, and devoutly all adored her, bringing long scrolls of prayers and covering the ground with the Papyrus they had written on.

And yet the delicate incense burnt constantly before her in thuribles of bronze and filled the sanctuary with fragrance.

But what did she want with perfumes and with incense, when all the flowers of the earth were hers? What did she want with scrolls of prayers and supplications from the faithful? She knew before they came what each one wished, and why they burnt incense and offered up rich gold and precious stones.

This one wanted wealth, and that one—love: here was one ambitious for great power, and here another who entreated knowledge, the knowledge that rules the world but each and all desired for themselves and came for self alone.

And from her throne of diamonds and gold, the little Idol looked on all, with her still, deep eyes smiling vaguely and enigmatically under her unclouded brows. She accepted the perfumes and the incense; she smiled gently at the presents and the offerings, and she listened patiently to long litanies sung amongst the fragrance of culled flowers.

For she was a sweet, gentle little Idol and very earnest in her vocation of benevolence. And her heart was kind and easily touched, and to most of the supplicants she granted their requests, and all had faith in her.

But at night, notwithstanding the prayers and the perfumes, notwithstanding all the good she wished to do, the poor little Idol on her gilded throne felt very lonely and very sad, because she knew there was something that she wanted, something that she missed.

And one evening just as the sun sunk beneath the horizon and night fell suddenly, when the brilliant temple full of the richness of many gifts was silent with solemn peacefulness, the heavy hangings of the portico were drawn aside.

On the threshold a young man paused and hesitated. He was beautiful and shapely as Buddha, with ebon hair and eyes of fire, with scarlet lips set in a face and figure of golden bronze. Graceful but shy as a maiden, he stood, then took a step forward bending the knee as he did so.

But he dared not approach the throne, for he was poor and he came with empty hands.

So he knelt at the edge of the soft, fine bamboo matting that was spread before the Idol, and without raising his eyes he spoke :

"Oh thou whose look I dare not meet, but whom I love, listen I implore.

"I am poor and wretched, I bring no gift, however humble, but I love thee !

"I toil the livelong day and I have not even the tiniest morsel of sandalwood to burn before thee, but as I came I plucked these flowers on the borders of the stream, I kissed them and I bring them accept them, for I love thee !

"I love thee ! Thou art divinely beautiful, and I know that thou art good.

"I love thee, because thou givest relief to those that suffer, comfort to those that weep, hope to the hopeless and courage to those of little faith.

"I love thee I have come long miles to gaze upon thy beauty which now I dare not contemplate my homage is so mean, so unworthy of thy greatness I tremble, but I love thee !"

Then the little Idol who had always been so lonely and so sad, was filled with happiness and joy. She looked down on the youth with her still deep eyes smiling vaguely and enigmatically, and seeing his eyes raised to hers but closed in unutterable worship, she, for the first time in her long and dreary life, was sorry for her Ivory Idolhood, for ever cold and lifeless.

But as she was a sweet, gentle little Idol, and very powerful to please those that believed and had faith in her, she told the golden stars and the silver moon to shine down upon her, to make her more radiantly beautiful than before ; she told the soft, sweet voices of the night to ring out their most entrancing harmonies and she commanded the flowers the humble worshipper held in his hands, to fill the temple with fresh fragrance.

Then the spell of his ecstasy was broken, he opened his eyes

and gazed his fill on his divinity, till slowly the radiance of light fell from her and darkness reigned once more.

And softly he turned and passed through the heavy curtains and shut out the beautiful Idol from the world of ugliness and sin.

But even as he went, he heard a voice, lovely and wondrous as Heavenly music, singing.

Was the music in his ears, or was it in his fervent heart?

“You love me, and you have asked nothing for yourself.
You loved me without having seen me, or having known me, and your only offering was of flowers with your kiss upon their dewy petals!

“You have asked nothing—you shall have all; riches, happiness, contentment, everything that makes life beautiful—and greater than all other blessings you shall have in joy, and gladness and delight, that talisman of life
Love!”

And the youth went forth light-hearted and full of gratitude, full of confidence and of hope in the promise that sang in his ears, and the world was beautiful and kind to him for ever.

And in her gilded sanctuary, in the midst of the fragrant flowers and the faint mists of incense, and surrounded by precious gifts, with her beautiful hands outstretched, her still, deep eyes smiling vaguely and enigmatically from under her smooth, serene unclouded brows, the little Idol of carved ivory mused dreamily.

But the sadness had gone from her lovely face, for her lonely sweetness and beauty were warmed by the glow of
love!

A Revolutionary Episode.

BY MRS. E. M. DAVY.

I.

A SAD and strange story is that of the Marquis de Favras, who played his part in history scarcely more than a century ago. The question still remains unanswered ; was he innocent as some believed, or as guilty as by others he was represented ?

Thomas de Mahy, Marquis de Favras, was born at Blois, March 26th, 1744. He entered the Mousquetaires in 1755—there was no childhood in those days—and at the age of nineteen, was already a captain, and had seen eight years' service, including two campaigns.

But that was not enough to satisfy him ; he had dreams of greater things ; and, contrary to the custom of officers of that period, he set about re-educating himself.

Literature, art, finance, political economy, even architecture, by turns occupied his attention. He is represented to have applied himself with more ardour than method, more diversity than depth ; for this handsome, brave young fellow became persuaded that he knew everything, and developed into one of those dreamers who are for ever following a chimera, or tracing out plans impossible of realisation.

The details of his sudden and unexpected marriage in Germany with the Princess Caroline of Anhalt are absolutely unknown.

How a penniless young captain of dragoons—as he then was—managed to contract an alliance which he said himself, “ *n'eut pas déshonoré nos rois*,” remains an unexplained mystery. The Prince of Anhalt refused to acknowledge his daughter's marriage, or to give her a dowry ; but the law compelled him to pay her a thousand florins a year, and the mésalliance was afterwards forgiven.

A thousand florins per annum, however, was not much where-with to figure at Court, so M. de Favras found it necessary to quit the service. He retired on half-pay ; took a small *appartement*—

ment, No. 21 Place Royale, and lived there several years very quietly, writing a great deal on political economy. His work, not without merit, was read and approved by Mirabeau.

In June, 1789, he took up his abode at Versailles, and from this day his name belongs to history.

On the 6th October he may be said to enter upon the scene.

The previous evening, it will be remembered, was the preface to the Reign of Terror. At five o'clock in the morning, Paris was awakened by the ominous ringing of the tocsin. A band of women, and men disguised as women, had forced the doors of the Hôtel de Ville.

"A Versailles, à Versailles!" was being roared on all sides, when Lafayette appeared suddenly in their midst.

He boldly declared that they should not go to Versailles, he emphatically forbade the National Guard to stir. But he had counted too much on his own popularity.

A wretch named Maillard, who later acquired a certain celebrity, placed himself, drum in hand, at the head of this imposing manifestation.

In hopes of moderating the mad multitude, Lafayette feigned to join them. He gave the signal for departure; and though he merely seemed the leader of a crowd clamouring for bread, it was in fact the Republic that marched behind him, on its way to put down royalty.

The utmost consternation prevailed at Versailles on the approach of this column. The King was out hunting; messengers were dispatched to warn him.

"Forty 'thousand men are marching upon us," said Mirabeau to President Mounier.

"So much the better," replied the president, "let them kill us all—all—and France will the sooner be a Republic!"

The column was already defiling in the Avenue de Paris during a pouring rain; Maillard, covered with mud, a naked sword in his hand, exciting the people with word and gesture.

Within the palace all was confusion. Among the officers one alone had presence of mind enough to make a bold proposition; this was the Marquis de Favras:

"It is shameful," cried he, "to permit these hordes to advance without resistance upon the palace of our king!" and he proposed to the courtiers to call together all faithful soldiers and

sally out sword in hand. They objected that the enemy were too numerous. "Then I will have horses!" said de Favras; and immediately sought the Comte de Saint-Priest, then minister. The latter kept him long waiting. When admitted, de Favras asked permission to use the King's horses for one hour: "We will undertake, with them and some cannon, to disperse these hordes," said he.

But it required the royal sanction to make use of the horses in the Royal stables, and not until the King returned from hunting could the minister give leave; an hour later de Favras was informed that the Court having heard that Lafayette and several battalions of the National Guard were among the people from Paris no action could be taken in the matter.

But Maillard and his drunken band—with no court etiquette to cramp their doings—had already made their way to the foot of the *tribune nationale*, and at three o'clock in the morning decided on pillaging the palace and assassinating the King.

They broke down the palisading and it is well known what horrible scenes were enacted, notwithstanding the efforts of Lafayette, who did prodigies of valour. The pacificator of La Vendée never forgot that memorable night when he so bravely defended the Queen. How at day-dawn he appeared on the balcony and, before the eyes of that howling multitude, kissed respectfully the hand of Marie-Antoinette. His action was applauded, for the people of Paris applaud anything that resembles a *coup de théâtre*. Peace even seemed restored; but it was not so; in fact, nothing had actually changed. The mob was victorious and bent on carrying the King back to Paris.

M. de Favras with some other devoted officers escorted Louis XVI. who returned to Paris as a captive; the disarmed body-guard marching on foot surrounded by the hideous mob carrying naked swords. Women covered with cockades and tri-coloured ribbons surrounded the King's carriage, singing ribald songs, while the heads of two of the body-guard who had been killed in the palace were borne aloft on pikes.

De Favras, deeply moved by all these terrible events, remarked by the door of the Queen's carriage a young officer of the National Guard, who wept on seeing their Majesties in so frightful a situation. He enquired the name of this officer, and learned that he was Pierre Marquier, a sub-lieutenant of

Grenadiers, of the faubourg Saint Antoine. De Favras wrote the name down on his tablets and counted Marquier among those whose sentiments corresponded with his own.

It remains now to show what fatal consequences followed this apparently trivial incident.

II.

FROM the day following the King's return to the Tuileries, the so-called conspiracy of de Favras was reckoned to commence.

After the 6th of October, being "suspected" by the commune, he was closely watched. A secret agent, named Joffroy, never actually lost sight of him for two months, and this spy—sometimes joined by M. Masson de Neuville, aide-de-camp to Lafayette, revealed in subsequent examinations the minutest details of de Favras' conduct.

M. de Favras, at this time, liked nothing better than to wander about the streets of Paris, observing all he saw and heard. Anarchy reigned everywhere. In public places, in the cafés—the groups of people in the streets—all spoke only of vengeance and assassinations. Even the theatres told the same story. Most frequently he walked in the direction of the faubourg Saint Antoine, which was the chief centre of demagoguery, and listened aghast to the menaces that were uttered.

One day he heard a bare-armed orator expounding with such luxury of detail, such strategic precision, a plan for attacking the Tuileries, that he was terror-stricken. He believed it to be his duty to go immediately and inform M. de Luxemburg, who then acted as Captain of the Guard to the King.

M. de Luxemburg, acquainted with the part de Favras had taken at Versailles, and touched by his devotion, begged him to continue to watch closely the movements of the faubourg, and proposed to place funds at his disposal for the purpose. At this, de Favras grew red with anger. M. de Luxemburg said he understood his delicacy, but that money should be made over to him in such a manner as to set aside all scruples; and at a subsequent interview he received 200 louis—supposedly from the King—on the understanding that he was to find among the old *Garde Française* or the *Garde Nationale*, a company of brave resolute men ready to repair to the Tuileries on a given signal, to die, if need were, in defending the King.

The Marquis de Favras felt his imagination glow as he pictured himself the saviour of the royal family. Here was an opportunity to play the rôle he had vainly attempted at Versailles. He only required a few brave men to aid him. Surely that young lieutenant of Grenadiers whom he had seen weeping by the King's carriage was the very man! His soldiers also had conducted themselves nobly at the palace. But how was Marquier to be found?

By one of those coincidences which happen so unexpectedly at times, he received a visit that very night from two acquaintances—Messieurs Morel and Tourcaty—who had come direct from the Comédie Française, and naturally fell to discussing Chénier's new drama, *Charles IX.*, which they asserted should be hissed.

Pleased with the apparent sentiments of these men—recruiting officers by profession, and whom de Favras knew to be both clever and crafty—imprudently he exclaimed:

"Ah, messieurs, it is not a question of condemning a play. They are going to assassinate our King. That is what must be prevented!"

On being pressed for an explanation the marquis gave one in part, and asked if they knew the address of Pierre Marquier. No; but they undertook to obtain it and also to arrange an interview between him and the marquis, without divulging the name of the latter.

The night following, Marquier and de Favras met beneath the arcades of the Place Royale, when de Favras unfolded his plans. The other listened, but being a cautious man replied evasively, promising however to return to the same spot a week later. They separated; but not before they had been seen and heard. Concealed behind one of the pillars was Joffroy, the spy. From that moment the Marquis de Favras was a lost man.

After this, several meetings took place; de Favras persisting in obtaining information concerning the loyalty of the "Old Guard" and if they were desirous of re-organisation. But Marquier maintained what ought to have been regarded as an ominous reserve. One evening de Favras put into his hand a certain pamphlet entitled "*Ouvrez donc vos yeux*," and the violent nature of this brochure so alarmed the young lieutenant

that, notwithstanding his good-feeling towards the King personally, he went to meet this unknown *conspirateur* no more.

But the Marquis de Favras was to be still further compromised. The enemy set another snare.

It was agreed that Morel and Tourcaty should persuade him that a large sum of money would be required to enrol his band of loyalists. Two million francs were named; and after various ineffectual efforts to procure this sum, a Dutch banker named Chomel entered into the intrigue on the understanding that Monsieur the King's brother should also be implicated in the affair. De Favras did all the negotiating, and was led to believe that the two millions would be forthcoming. On the evening of December 24th, he presented himself before M. Chomel for the money, but, after some delay, he was informed that owing to an unfortunate mistake the cashier had left for the night. De Favras said he would return next day.

Five minutes later, as he was walking along the street, Joffroy the spy sprung on him, seized him by the collar, and effected his arrest.

Almost at the same moment—nine o'clock in the evening—the Marquise de Favras was also arrested, at No. 21 Place Royale, and her husband's papers seized. Husband and wife were conveyed to the Hôtel-de-Ville, and next day were confined separately in the prison of l'abbaye Saint Germain.

The intelligence spread far and wide—was placarded in the streets, cafés, and clubs—that two aristocrats had been arrested for plotting to raise 30,000 men to assassinate M. de Lafayette and the Mayor of Paris—Monsieur, the king's brother, was also implicated.

The trial lasted two months. Morel was the chief witness against the accused. He gave the Marquis an odious character, and revealed the whole of the alleged plot; entering into the minutest details as to how the King was to be carried off, Lafayette's carriage stopped, and the General shot as he looked from the window.

Strong as was the evidence against de Favras, the judges appeared to hesitate. This exasperated the people. Mobs assembled round the Châtelet, threatening that if the Marquis were not condemned they would storm the prison and wreak vengeance on him themselves.

February 18th was the day fixed for the "jugement suprême." Immense crowds surrounded the Châtelet and blocked traffic in all the neighbouring streets.

Lafayette is reproached with saying that he would not be answerable for the National Guard, or for the peace of Paris, if de Favras were acquitted; but that reproach is believed now to be unmerited.

At midnight M. de Favras was brought into court and sentence was read, condemning him to do penance before Notre Dame in his shirt, bare-headed, with bare feet, a rope round his neck, a lighted torch in his hand; and thence to be taken in a dung-cart to the Place de Grève, to be there "pendu et étranglé jusqu'à ce que mort s'en suive."

Executions in those days took place within twenty-four hours.

The Marquis de Favras had solemnly denied all the charges laid against him. When offered the consolation of religion, he answered that his greatest consolation was that given him by his own innocence; he was the victim of scoundrels; he pitied his accusers.

As the clocks struck three, a roll of drums was heard; the door of the Châtelet opened, and in the midst of a numerous escort M. de Favras appeared.

At this sight the multitude gave vent to the wildest expressions of delight. The Marquis walked with a firm step; his countenance was calm and serene. Neither the cries of the people nor their insults and outrages seemed to affect him in the least. He wore over his clothes a long white shirt inscribed before and behind with these words:

"Conspirateur contre l'étât,"

His commanding height and white vesture rendered him visible to all; his bare head rose above the caps of the soldiers, and his long, uncurled, unpowdered hair hung over his shoulders.

An open dung-cart drawn by a white pony and driven by a man in a blouse awaited him, and when he had entered it, accompanied by the curé of Saint Paul, the cortège proceeded slowly to the Cathedral of Notre Dame.

There the spectacle was imposing and bizarre in the extreme. Battalions of guards were drawn up forming a large open square. Outside this, surged immense crowds; windows were crammed

with spectators. Large fires had been kindled at equal distances ; refreshment booths were everywhere.

When the cart entered the open square formed by the soldiers, a hush fell on the multitude. M. de Favras alighted, and with one hand accepted the lighted torch, with the other the *arrêt de mort*. Then advancing to the church door :

"People," he said in a sonorous voice, "listen to the death sentence I shall read to you. I am innocent. . . ."

Kneeling, he read the sentence ; after which he asked to be taken to the Hotel-de-Ville. There he dictated his last will and testament, denying all knowledge of the conspiracy, asserting his devotion to the King, and asking pity for his unfortunate wife and two young children.

This occupied some time. It was night. A fine rain had begun to fall, and the populace were growing impatient ; they clamoured to have the culprit brought out, and became so violent that an officer of the National Guard was compelled to enter the Hôtel-de-Ville and declare that it would be imprudent to delay the execution any longer.

De Favras had just finished dictating his will ; he next wrote a letter of farewell to his wife and children, calmly folded it, then turning to the officer intimated his willingness to go.

When M. de Favras appeared, the plaudits of the multitudes were renewed. The gibbet stood in the midst of a large open space, across which M. de Favras walked rapidly, followed by the executioner. Mounting a few steps he paused and waved his hand for silence. Then he re-asserted his innocence of the charge laid against him :

"Devant Dieu je suis innocent !" he reiterated in a loud voice, and turning to the executioner, "Faites votre office."

The hangman fastened the rope and pushed the condemned off the ladder. For an instant he was swung far above the heads of the crowd. After one supreme convulsion the long white figure became motionless in the glare of the flaming torches.

A death-like stillness reigned, which suddenly and startlingly was broken by a single voice. It was that of a child who had climbed upon a post to see :

"Saute Marquis, saute Marquis !" he cried in glee.

It acted like a signal. The crowd took up the cry, and hurrahing wildly, rushed forward with the intention of seizing

the corpse and dragging it through the streets. But the soldiers crossed bayonets and the body of the victim was respected. It was given up to the family—another being substituted—and interred that night at Saint Jean-en-Grève.

Madame de Favras learned next day by the voice of a public crier who was passing under her prison window the sentence on her husband and its execution. She fell backwards and fainted.

They set her at liberty. She had been arrested without cause, and was restored to her family, no explanation being given.

Then, speedily the Revolution grew to such dimensions that it swept away as in a whirlwind the remembrance of this tragedy which after all was but one episode among the many that were to follow.

"Only Jack."

BY EVELYN ST. LEGER,

Author of "JUST ABOUT BETTY."

SHE was so pretty — so pink and pretty and dainty — with laughing eyes and naughty little saucy dimples that came and went in such distracting fashion, that it was small wonder that young Jack Fanshaw found himself deep in love after forty-eight hours spent in her society. Her name was Lucy Maughan.

"Lucy!" she would say with an upturning of her celestial nose, that described appreciation of her baptismal name, even more accurately than the tone in which it was said, "Lucy! I never heard of a Lucy daring to possess strength of character, did you?"

And the one appealed to would look at her and smile, thinking the world was none the worse for a certain amount of feminine weakness, which being interpreted meant, in this instance, Lucy Maughan.

In course of time Jack Fanshaw proposed—it took him a whole afternoon at Hurlingham to make up his mind what he was going to say, but it only took Miss Maughan three seconds and a half to give him his answer. It was "No—no—no!"

She seemed sorry to say it; and the dimples went away, and the eyes looked grave. But, for all that there was no sign of wavering, and Jack took her decision like a man, and joined his regiment out in India for two whole years.

"She's young yet," quoth Master Fanshaw, with the superiority of twenty-five over eighteen. "I'll leave her alone till we come back, and then we shall see what we shall see."

Miss Maughan enjoyed those two years vastly—well she did, for they were the happiest of her life—happiest in a child's sense of the word, happy in the innocence of ignorance—in the sunshine that surrounded her—in the fact that all the world was young, and she was fair to look upon.

Then Jack came home, and she treated him to all the newly-acquired airs and fashionable graces that might erase the

childish impression from his heart, and show him plainly what a woman she had grown, while he—he was just the same.

This very womanliness was just a trifle over-done, but Jack bowed himself to circumstances, and treated her with dignity and respect; and if he smiled sometimes—it was only in his sleeve.

They became friends—great friends—she found it so convenient to have him always at her side when less faithful ones declined and fell, but Jack, dear old Jack, you know—why, if she did not want him, she just told him so. It was only Jack.

However, after a week's stay together in a country house that Autumn, Jack spoke his mind; and Lucy asked for three days in which to think; but they were evil days to Jack, and the thoughts were not good thoughts for him. She tried to say it prettily, as a woman should, she tried to soften the monosyllable "No," but it was of no avail. When a man wants "Yes," a soft "No" or a hard "No" are much the same to him.

He stood and held both her hands in his and forced her to raise her eyes that he might read the truth, and then she rebelled, and dropped her eyes and drew away her hands, and said she did not care a bit for anybody.

And Jack said, "For nobody, dear?" and she said "Nobody," rather petulantly.

Jack left the next day, but before going he wrote in the visitors' book, beside his name, "*Tout vient à lui qui sait attendre*," and all the people wondered what he meant, and Lucy Maughan read it with the rest, and shrugged her pretty shoulders, and went to play battledore and shuttlecock with Lord St. Maur.

After this Jack's name took a prominent position in the papers—he was for ever playing polo or riding races, or winning glory for his regiment in some form or another, and his friends were rather pleased to say, "Jack Fanshaw? Why, I've known him since he was that high," indicating generally a few inches from the floor.

So time passed on, and Miss Maughan and Mr.—now Captain Fanshaw met at intervals, in the Park, in a drawing-room, at a social function, and sometimes they pretended not to see each other, and at other times they spoke—little ordinary politenesses that meant less than nothing—and when the season was over Lucy went to stay with the dearest friend in the world, and prepared to have some fun.

There was another house a few miles off, getting up a big party for the "Twelfth," and among other good shots this party included Jack Fanshaw. Of course they met—it was hardly likely in a friendly neighbourhood they could avoid doing so—and Lucy's hostess, knowing nothing of the real state of affairs, but imagining a good deal, invited Captain Fanshaw to come and stay the following week. Jack hesitated a moment before accepting, and searched round the room for a pair of blue eyes—he found and met them—as they glanced carelessly past him on to somebody else. Then he decided to come.

In the billiard-room and smoking-room he was worshipped, men liked listening to his talk—in the drawing-room he was adored for his courteous manners—courteous to all alike—no one woman claimed them to herself, not even Miss Maughan, who smiled inwardly, and wondered how long it would last. After a few days she grew restive, and began snubbing people in a wholly unaccountable fashion—but Captain Fanshaw she never snubbed—because—well, it might be because she lacked the opportunity.

One evening at dinner conversation turned on the regimental steeplechases that were to take place in the Autumn, and as Captain Fanshaw was to ride in them, his colours, his horses, and himself were all under discussion. The host argued, somewhat despotically, against racing in general, and steeplechases in particular, while no words were bad enough to condemn a married man's taking part in them.

"There I quite agree with you," said Jack at once, and all the ladies nodded approval. "Fond as I am of racing, I would certainly give it up were I a married man—or—" below his breath—"likely to be."

"Suppose you were engaged—what then?"

Jack turned to the speaker:

"Same thing," he said; "I wouldn't race, at least, not in a steeplechase."

Lucy Maughan raised her eyes furtively from the other side of the table—her heart was beating somewhat irregularly—inclined to spasmodic thumps; then, fearing observation, she dropped them again, looking back, however, with the utmost haste, to be absolutely sure that Jack's interest had not abated in the picture hanging behind her head.

This was the last evening they would be together, for the party were to break up on the following day, and after dinner they strolled out into the moonlight and tried to think it warm as summer, and Lucy stood in the doorway of the conservatory alone. Everybody broke up into couples, and sauntered off or sat still, as the fancy took them. Jack, with his host, paced backwards and forwards, smoking, deep in some political discussion of the day.

"Did he see her?"

Lucy thought not; yet for safety's sake she drew into the shadow, and tried to think about the stars. The voices rose and fell as they passed the door, and down the grass slope to the left—then after a silence, the red ends of two cigars would appear faintly on the return journey, and the voices be heard again.

Miss Maughan left off thinking about the stars, and wished she had not snubbed Major Fownes, or Sir Arthur Guernsey quite so hopelessly, they were not half bad to talk to—not half bad—when you hadn't anybody else.

The two men passed again. Captain Fanshaw took his cigar from his lips and looked towards the door; it was so unexpected that he caught a certain wistful expression before it changed suddenly to one of utter unconcern.

"You here all alone?" he said, and paused.

Lucy wished he would go on. It looked as if she had done it on purpose.

"Yes, I—I like it," she stammered. "It's so nice and quiet, don't you know?"

"Don't care about being disturbed, I daresay," said the host, burning to argue out the political question.

"Oh, you don't disturb me," said Lucy sweetly, having regained her composure. "I was only star-gazing."

"Now, do you know anything of astronomy?" said Jack, lingering on the threshold. "I've always wanted to understand it. That star there for instance, do you know the name of it?"

Lucy came out of the shadow, and stood by his side. Their host's feet scuffled the gravel impatiently, but they never noticed it, and by-and-bye, he went away and left them, but they never noticed that either.

Still they only talked of common-place subjects; he asked a few ordinary questions just to show he was not thinking of anything else, and she answered, somewhat at random, because it

did seem such absurd waste of time—when he must know, that she knew—what?

“M—m—m——” Jack’s voice went murmuring on, and Miss Maughan began to get seriously annoyed. It really *was* stupid of him, when the moments were flying so fast, and they might have to go in any minute—why couldn’t he—why *couldn’t* he——?

A sort of expectant silence seemed to bring her to her senses; she had the uncomfortable feeling that he had asked her a question, and she hadn’t the vaguest notion what sort of reply to give, so said the only thing she could say under the circumstances.

“I beg your pardon,” rather hastily.

Jack repeated himself as though he were amused, and Miss Maughan pinched her fingers that it might not occur again.

“I was only asking if you would care to come to the races,” he said. “I suppose you will be down south by then.”

“I don’t care for racing,” rather shortly.

“Don’t you? I fancied you did,” so pleasantly said it irritated her.

“No,” she burst out. “I can’t think how a man *can* spend his whole life in such an idiotic fashion!”

Jack noticed (the temper lying underneath the words and smiled right away inside.

“No,” he demurred, “as you say, one can’t understand that, but one can quite realize its being a great pleasure to a man—till he gets——” he stopped abruptly.

Lucy’s mood changed in a twinkling.

“What date are they?” she asked, without any sign of huff at all.

“Friday the 13th. I’ll send you a card, if I may.”

She hesitated solemnly before answering:

“I don’t *know* that I could come—but I’ll see.”

Jack said nothing, but propped himself against the doorway, and whistled “Annie Rooney” softly under his breath. There were some lilies growing close to where they stood, (and the thoughts of each were mixed up in the luscious heavy scent, and the moonlight, and the stillness—and each other.

Neither of them spoke for several minutes, then Lucy feigned a smothered yawn, and murmured something about “going in.”

"Not yet—not yet," said Jack, and he went on whistling, slowly as though to accompany his thoughts.

"She's my sweetheart—I'm her beau,
She's my Annie, I'm her Joe,
Soon we'll marry—never to part
Little Annie Rooney is my sweetheart."

Lucy found herself involuntarily following the air with the words, and when it ceased she was caught looking at a pair of brown eyes by the very brown eyes themselves.

He stooped his head.

"Well, dear?" so, *so* softly.

"Yes?"

"Haven't you something to say?"

"I? No, nothing," with surprised perplexity.

"Nothing different from three years ago?"

Such a bound in Lucy's heart, she thought he would hear—but she steadied her voice to a fearful degree of tranquillity, and replied with another question.

"What makes you ask such a thing?"

"Because"—very slowly—"I think you have changed—a little—a very little—just lately."

"Is that"—with quiet coldness—"judging by yourself? Have you changed too?"

The coldness was lost upon Jack; he only noticed the "too." Triumph!

"I changed?" he said. "No fear! I gave my heart to you, dear, once and for ever—years ago—and it's always waiting—always ready—whenever you care to claim it."

He was looking at her now, and she began to feel all on a sudden as though the flowers—and—and the moonlight—and the—the sound of his voice—were making her giddy or dazed. It was a curious sensation, she never remembered it before, but she must—she simply must hold on to something. She took a step forward, Jack evidently understood, and put out a hand, in another half-second of time who knows but what—

"Lucy! Lu-cy!"

A chorus of voices suddenly surrounded the conservatory, and Captain Fanshaw and Miss Maughan hastily put a good six feet between them, bending with prompt interest over the nearest plants.

After that it was not possible to have another word either that night or the following morning. They were neither of them the sort of people to make opportunities by getting up earlier than usual, or lagging behind at unearthly hours, and so defying Fate. In the short time allowed before the carriage came to the door, Jack tried his best, but was always baulked in his endeavours by some good-natured he or she, who had not the foggiest notion that his or her room would be preferable to his or her company at that precise moment. And so it was that they clasped hands amongst a crowd of others in the hall, amidst a pile of luggage and all the paraphernalia that implies "good-bye." Though they said "*Au revoir*," with a smile into each other's eyes, and parted.

"Only three weeks," said Jack to himself, as he leant back in the railway carriage, "only three weeks, and then——!"

"Only three weeks," said Lucy, up in her room, "you blessed *blessed* Jack, and then—we shall see what we shall see," as Jack had once said himself.

It was a curious coincidence, but all Lucy's friends and relations were against attending these particular races. One after another she sought in vain, and excuse after excuse piled themselves up in such formidable array, that she despaired of ever going.

"I *must* see him ride his last steeplechase," she vowed, excited to fever pitch, only three days before the event, and flew off in a cab to have a final contest with a tiresome woman, whose sole excuse was laziness and boredom. A great deal of wheedling, a great deal of coaxing, and a sign of tears near the surface, had effect, and when Friday the 13th instant dawned, Lucy and her friend found themselves by twelve o'clock, seated in the Grand Stand.

She was a pretty little woman, this friend, and had plenty of people to talk to her, so had Lucy—but she had neither eyes nor ears for any of them, every nerve and sense were strained for the coming of one.

"Lucy! What's the name of your man riding in the steeplechase?"

"Fanshaw. Captain Fanshaw. Why? Do you see him?"

"No, I don't even know him by sight, but I daresay my cousin does. Ted! let me introduce you to Miss Maughan."

The cousin lifted his hat and said :

"Fanshaw? 'Course I know him. Was walking round here with him not five minutes ago. Said he was looking for somebody—perhaps it was you."

"Perhaps it was," said Lucy, and smiled a smile with dimples.

"If so," said the young man, with an appreciative tone in his voice, "he'll be round again before long."

But two races took place and still Jack did not come. Lucy felt growing colder and colder somewhere in the region of her heart, and her whole soul seemed possessed by the most bitter sense of disappointment she had ever known.

Presently her friend suggested going to the "Paddock," to see them mount.

"You had better come, Lucy," she said, "for there's only one more race before your steeplechase."

So they walked round, and the cousin tried to engage his companion in conversation, but there was a certain amount of ambiguity about her remarks which showed how very little of her attention she was giving him, and in a voice of real concern, he suddenly said: "Can't imagine where Fanshaw can be—I know he's looking for somebody, and if it's you—it's such a bore for him, don't you know."

"There he is!"

Three words so fat with satisfaction had seldom fallen on Anson's ear before. He turned and looked at her.

"Shall I fetch him?" he asked.

"Yes——"

Jack took one stride, and sent his eyes through and through and through her. He seized her hand and held it in a vice. The colour deepened even under the sunburn.

"It *is* good to see you," he said, and Lucy's heart sang—sang—sang—till she thought it would burst.

A groom had been badly kicked in the stables, and of course Jack had been the one man to stay and look after him till a doctor had been fetched—stayed—though all his heart was searching for somebody out on the course—so just like Jack!

"Anson!" he called presently, when he was going to mount. "I think you know Miss Maughan. I want her to see this ride, will you get her a good place as near the winning post as you can?—and then, meet me at the gate—both of you."

He swung himself into the saddle, and Anson nodded his head.

"Right you are, old chap. Will you come, Miss Maughan?"

She stood hesitating a minute, then—

"Good luck, Jack," she said rather shyly.

He bent down towards her.

"My darling! God bless you," he answered softly, then aloud, "Meet me at the gate!" and with a smile, in his brave attire of silk, he passed out of sight.

Ted Anson hustled her along, and elbowed his way through the crowd till they came close to the winning post.

"Can you see?" he asked.

"Splendidly, thanks."

"They're off!—He's third—he's third—third—took that well. My word! Did you see? Second! By Jove! he's creeping along. Second—second! Go it, old man!—He'll do it yet——"

On they came, "Blue and Black" *his* colours pushing to the front. Lucy held her breath, and put her hand to her throat, she thought she was going to scream from sheer excitement. Ted beside her yelled himself hoarse, as "Black and Blue" shot away from the others—and——

"Good God!"

There was a murmuring sigh from the concourse of people, as the leading horse with his rider fell suddenly—fell—not at a fence, not at a water-jump, not at an obstacle—but on the dead level, within a few feet of victory—crossed his legs—and fell. Only the horse struggled as if to rise.

Forgetful of everything, even the girl left in his charge, Anson jumped the barrier, and reached the fallen man almost before the last horse had passed.

One look, and "Good God!" escaped his lips again—for Jack was dead. Dead!

Do you understand what it means? *Jack* was dead—dead—*dead!* And Lucy Maughan, the girl he loved, and who had learnt to love him at last, was standing at the winning post—waiting—to tell him so.

And underneath the trees the band was playing——? Listen! You can almost hear the words.

"Soon we'll mar-ry, ne-ver to part——"

Oh, Sweethearts, think of it!—and thank God *you* have each other to love and pray for still.

A Cornish Maid.

BY BARBARA LAKE,

Author of "THE BETRAYAL OF REUBEN HOLT," "A PROFITLESS QUEST," etc. etc.

CHAPTER I.

TATTLE.

"There's not a breath of wind upon the hill,
Yet quivers every leaf and drops each blossom."

THE day had been hot and close, and even now, though the sun had gone down and the shades of evening were giving place to the deeper shades of night, the air was hot and stifling, still. A boding silence seemed to brood over the pretty Cornish village of Treverdale, while above the distant hills, where a bank of inky clouds was rising up and blotting out the sky-line, lightning flashed and quivered fitfully. It was far away, as yet, and a small knot of men, lounging about on the benches outside "The Foaming Beaker," watched it in mute stolidity, as they pulled at their short and blackened pipes.

"'T looks as if us 'ud git a tempest afore morning," said one of the group, breaking a lengthy silence by his remark.

"'T was a night like to this, just a year gone by, when Jenny laid her dear hand in mine and plighted her troth to me," muttered a fine, handsome young fellow, who, standing a little apart from the others, leant, with folded arms, against the door-post of the cosy-looking old inn. He had spoken more to himself than to his companions, and the only response to his scarcely audible words was a low laugh, which, however, was immediately covered by a prolonged and ostentatious cough.

The laugh and the cough both came from the first speaker—a man somewhere about forty years of age, short, sallow-faced, and limping of gait. He had been a widower for upwards of ten years, and he was reported to be well-to-do. For not only did he own the flour-mill down by the river, but he was supposed to have a comfortable sum of money stowed away in the bank, over at Polthorpe. Yet he was not a favourite with the maids of Treverdale (nor with anyone else, for that matter), and there

were few amongst them who would not have thought twice, before consenting to become his second mate.

"What have you got to laugh at, miller?" demanded the young man by the door-post, turning his head in the direction whence the offensive sound had come.

"I didn't laugh, Clem Freer," declared the limping miller, Tom Penrose by name. "'Twas my cough—it always takes me sudden, as you know roight waal."

"I've nothing to say against your cough," returned Clem Freer, "though I might have something to say about a laugh that was turned on me."

"What should I turn a laugh on 'ee for, my lad?" asked Tom, in a whining tone. For he stood in considerable awe of handsome Clem Freer.

"One can laugh, I suppose, if one's so minded, without being called to account for it?" put in another young fellow, striving to attract Clem's attention to himself.

"Any one can do any thing he likes, Will Ashdown, so that he doesn't meddle with me," retorted Clem.

"Who wants to meddle with you?" cried Ashdown, showing a disposition to take up the cudgels in the miller's behalf, albeit he detested him as cordially as did anyone.

"Well, it seems to me that *you* do," said Clem quietly.

"Awh, now, doan't 'ee git wranglin' roun' *my* place, lads," interposed the buxom landlady, appearing at the door-way. "'T' Foamin' Beaker's' a peaceable house, an' if 'ee wants to squabble, do 'ee git away up street to t' 'Miners' Rest.' I 'ull ha' none o' it here!"

"Us ain't squabbling, misses," asserted the miller; "but Clem Freer was a saying as 'twas a night like to this when he 'suaded Jenny Caerden to plight her troth to he, an' he seemed to take it amiss 'cos us didn't gainsay un. Us didn't spaak a ward to un about it, good or bad."

"'Tis a thousen' pities 'ee caan't buy t' ring an' wed t' maid to wance, Clem Freer," said the landlady, laying a kindly hand on Clem's arm. "Her's a bit flirty maybe, but her 'ull sober down, wance her's married."

"Who says my Jenny's flirty, Mrs. Taptun?" demanded Clem, straightening himself up and shaking the landlady's hand from his arm.

"Hoighty toighty, lad, how'm I to knaw who ses so?" cried Mrs. Taptun with a toss of the head. "Her's a pritty maid, an' her's over fond o' bein' told so, p'r'aps."

"Well," said Clem steadily, though with a sharp pain at his heart, "of course she's fond of being told so—why not? Can anyone say?"

"Lors no, not as *I* knaws by," answered Mrs. Taptun, flouncing back to her seat behind the bar. "But some folks are as touchy as they'm high!"

"Jenny Caerden is my promised wife, and it won't be well for anyone that speaks a word against her in my hearing," said Clem Freer, turning an angry glance on his companions, though it was lost on them by reason of the gathering darkness. "But I'm proud to know she's light-hearted and gay," he went on, "and you are all welcome to admire her as much as you like."

"Thank you for nothing!" muttered Ashdown, under his breath.

"Oh, us does admire her as 'tis," remarked the miller, innocently, but with a sly wink of his eye. "Her's a bonny little maid, an' no wan 'ull hear *me* say a ward agen her."

"She's as good as she's bonny," avowed Clem. "She's as true as steel, too, God bless her, and she's promised to wed me so soon as I can make a home for her."

"Is that like to be soon, Clem Freer?" asked the miller, a covert sneer making itself felt through the outward friendliness of the enquiry. "Ha' ye got a promise o' wark, at last?"

"Never you trouble yourself about what I've got or haven't got, Tom Penrose, 'tis no sort of matter to you. Good night to you, Mrs. Taptun," nodding across the bar to the landlady. And without another word to his companions, Clem strode rapidly away down the street.

"My Jenny flirty," he exclaimed, in half-audible soliloquy, slackening his pace as he got beyond observation. "What a fool I should be to give a moment's heed to the lying chatter of such a jealous pack as they," jerking his head in the direction of the "Beaker." "There's not one of them wouldn't lie to the devil himself, if he thought 'twould make a break between Jenny and me. There's not one of them wouldn't win her from me if 'twas possible. Flirty! 'Twould break her dear, faithful heart if she thought I could believe it. But I don't, I wouldn't wrong her

by half a moment's doubt. No. And yet—well, times are hard. It may be long ere I can make a home for my darling, and perhaps I ought to offer to set her free from her promise. She won't listen to it, of course I know that ; but 'twill be only fair to do it. My dear little Jenny ! I fancy I can see the big tears rising up in her sweet eyes, I fancy I can see the pretty vexed tossing of her dark head, when she hears what I've got to say. 'Twill be too bad to tease her, but 'tis only right to offer to set her free."

And as if a knotty and long-debated question had been satisfactorily settled, he went on with a lighter tread, till he came to the high wooden bridge, spanning the narrow river that crossed the High Street at the lower end. Seating himself on one of its parapets, he pulled off his cap, and, pushing the bright hair from his forehead, turned his eyes on some scattered cottages that straggled away towards the moors lying between Treverdale and the next village.

CHAPTER II.

"JENNY."

FOR a few minutes Clem Freer kept his position on the parapet, his fine figure distinctly outlined now and again by the lightning, and his eyes still turned towards the cottages.

The darkness seemed to be growing denser, but by gazing intently at the small domiciles, he was presently able to make out that through the doorway of the one farthest from the bridge, a light was dimly shining ; and replacing his cap, he rose, and began making his way towards it. Approaching it with eager steps, he saw that a girl was standing just outside the entrance, and a tender smile parted his lips as his eyes rested on her.

She was leaning against the rustic woodwork of the little jasmine-covered porch over the door, watching the lurid flashes that played about the tops of the distant hills. Her hands hanging idly before her, loosely clasped some knitting, by which employment she sometimes made a few shillings. But Jenny Caerden was no lover of work of any sort. She was not absolutely lazy, for she could be energetic enough on occasion ; but she had an inborn love of ease and comfort, a very passion of longing for plenty and pleasure.

At the present moment there was a weary, discontented look on her beautiful face, but the darkness hid it from Clem's loving gaze, and as the sound of his quick footsteps fell on her ear, it gave place to one of faint surprise mingled with a tiny touch of pleasure.

"Lors, Clem," she exclaimed, in a sweet and musical voice, as, throwing her knitting on a bench inside the porch, she hurried forward to meet her lover, "what brings 'ee this away, so late as 'tis? Why, t' clock up to St. Marg'rets' struck nine ever so long ago! You'm not goin' over t' moors to-night, are 'ee?"

"Of course I am, my darling," clasping her to his breast and kissing her. "How else should I get home?"

"Awh, but t' moors are so lonesome when 'tis dark. Couldn't 'ee stay in t' village?"

"That would mean paying for two lodgings at once, little girl, and we can't afford to be extravagant just yet, you know."

"You ha'n't got eny good news for me, then? You ha'n't heard o' eny reg'lar wark?" And she sighed heavily, as she put her questions.

"Not yet, dear," loosening his arms from about her and passing a hand caressingly over her dark, sleek head.

"Waal, you ha'n't told me what you'm over to Treverdle for, Clem. You'm not likely to get wark, this away."

"But I did get a job, dear. I have been over at Farmer Lane's place since five o'clock this morning, mending the hen-roosts a bit. They wanted it bad enough, and I'm not much of a hand at carpent'ring; but I did my best, and Lane wasn't hard to please."

"Doan't 'ee think 'ee might get something to do, over to Truro? 'Tis a long way to go, but 'tis a big town, an' most like 'ee 'ud get wark, there."

"I have tramped over to Truro times and again, Jenny, and to other places, too; but there wasn't any work to be had for the asking. I didn't like to tell you about it lest you should fret; but there's so many hands out of work, just now."

"Waal, 'tis weary wark, waitin' so long."

"My poor little Jenny," again gathering her to his breast, "'tis hard for you to be kept waiting so long! But be patient, dear—better times will come—they are sure to come, if only we are patient."

"Iss: but they're so long comin'! I wish t' widow Stanford 'ud marry faather, to wance. Her 'ud take charge o' t' chil'ren, then, an' I could get away to sarvice, somewhere."

"Don't talk of going to service, Jenny—it breaks my heart to hear you! Things will mend for us—they will surely mend for us, by-an'-by!"

"I wish they 'ud make haste about it, then!"

"So do I, with all my heart and soul. But do you know, Jenny, I feel, sometimes, as if it wasn't right to hold you to your promise—to—to keep you bound to me, now times are so bad. I love you very dearly—oh, my darling, I love you so dearly, that I can't bear to think of giving you up; yet if 'twould make you happier"—holding her from him and trying with wistful eyes to read the expression of her averted face—"if you would rather be free, I would—yes, I would give you back your promise."

Clem's breath came heavily, and a deadly fear clutched at his heart as Jenny, without a word, flung out of his arms and took a step or two away from him.

Ah, if only he had understood her wayward movement! If only he could have read her strange silence aright—could have been in the least aware of the feelings his offer had called up within her, how much sorrow, ay, and even disaster, might they both have escaped!

To be free—to be free, once more! Free, to make a wiser choice—to sell her beauty to some higher bidder!

These were the thoughts that flashed through Jenny Caerden's brain, and, for a few fleeting moments, they over-mastered her. But if Jenny loved anyone in the world besides herself, she loved Clem Freer; and, presently, in a quick revulsion of feeling, she turned back to him and threw herself on his breast with a sobbing, half-hysterical cry.

"Oh, Clem," she wailed, "how could 'ee talk so? How could 'ee think o' givin' me up? You'm cruel—you'm very cruel to me!"

"My dearest, my own darling Jenny," cried Clem, catching her to his heart, in a passion of joy, and pressing glad kisses on her head, her neck, anywhere his eager lips could find a spot on which to rest. "Cruel to you? God knows I would die a thousand times over, rather than cause you a moment's pain. Cruel to you, my pretty, faithful darling? Ah, never think that, Jenny! I know

—who so well?—the truth and constancy of your gentle nature ; but I thought it right to offer you your freedom. Yet I knew you wouldn't take it. Yes, dear, I knew, I knew you wouldn't !”

“ Poor Clem ! Dear Clem !” raising her head from his breast and softly stroking his cheek.

“ Do you know, Jenny,” said he, after a little happy silence, “ I have been thinking more than once, lately, that it might be a good thing to try my luck in London. Mr. Price—the foreman up at the tin-works, you know—says there isn't much chance of my getting taken on again, yet awhile, and I fancy it might be well to go and seek my fortune in London. I have still got a trifle of savings left—more than enough to pay the train-fare—and it mightn't be money ill spent. What do you think of the idea ?”

“ Awh, now, doan't 'ee go, Clem—doan't 'ee leave me,” dropping her head on his shoulder. “ Doan't 'ee go, yet awbiles, 't any rate.”

“ My darling, I won't go at all, unless you are quite willing. Yet it might turn out a lucky move. Heaven knows I don't want to go. All I love and care for, lies within the compass of a couple of miles of this spot, and 'twill be hard for me to leave it. But think the matter over, Jenny, and we will have another talk about it next time we meet.”

“ I couldn't abear 'ee to go, Clem, 'less I went w' 'ee, an' thaat isn't to be thought about till you ha' made your fortien. Hows'-ever, p'r'aps 'twill be best for 'ee to go. Yes, p'r'aps 'twill, 'cos 't doan't seem as if 'ee 'ud ever get wark agen, here aways. But 'tis time 'ee was to home—'tis sech a lonesome walk over t' moors, an' I'm fearfu' o' the storm, for 'ee. But whaat kept 'ee up t' village, so late ?”

“ I stayed to finish the hen-roosts, you know. Then Mrs. Lane asked me to leave some eggs for her at 'The Beaker,' an' I stopped there a spell. Tom Penrose, and one or two others, were dawdling round the door, and I must needs dawdle, too, instead of hurrying on, to my poor little lonely maid.”

“ Did 'ee leave t' miller—did 'ee leave 'em all up to 'T' Beaker,' Clem ?”

“ Yes, dear—they weren't showing any signs of moving, when I came away. But where's your father, Jenny ?—isn't he home yet ?”

"No. Un's up to 'T' Miners' Rest'—or p'raps to t' widow Stanford's, at t' gen'ral shop."

"You won't wait up for him, darling?—'tis time you were in bed."

"Yes, 'tis; an' I'm goin' d'rec'ly—I never wait up for faather. An' I allus put t' chil'ren to bed early, 'cos I get so weary o' 'em."

"Poor little maid! 'Tis hard lines for you to have the care of a lot of brothers and sisters. I wish to God I could take you, at once, to a brighter home! I shall have to go to London, Jenny—I don't see any help for it. But fortunes are soon made, there."

"Yes, so they be. But you must be gitten' away to home, Clem, lest t' storm comes over. Do 'ee maak haste, now!"

"And you will go to bed, Jenny, as soon as I leave you?"

"Yes, sure. I 'ull put t' can'le i' t' winder, for faather, an' then I 'ull go, to wance."

"Good-night, then, my darling, my own true love. I shall see you again, soon."

And with tender embraces, the two parted—Jenny watching her lover's slowly-retreating figure, and he turning, again and again, for another glimpse of her, till distance and the darkness hid her from his sight.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE BRIDGE.

CLEM FREER was not a native of Cornwall, he having been born in a suburb of London. He was an only child, and for his station, had been carefully brought up. But losing both parents when he was somewhere about twelve years of age, his maternal grandfather—a bred-and-born Cornishman—had taken charge of him—setting him, in due course, to work in the tin-mines where he himself had laboured all his life.

These tin-mines were a mile-and-a-half out of Treverdale, and a like distance from the village where Clem had lived since his arrival in Cornwall. He had known Jenny Caerden since she was a wee, bare-footed thing, scampering about in the happiest indifference as to the brevity and scantiness of her petticoats; and, until she had reached the age of seventeen, he had not been in the least impressed by her personal charms.

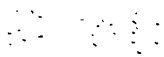
By this time, however, Jenny's figure—tall and straight as a queen-lily—was fully developed, while the loveliness of her face had already turned the heads of half the lads in Treverdale. She was gifted, too, with bright and witching manners, and Clem Freer—who, hitherto had seen and thought but little of her—happening to meet her at the wedding of a mutual friend, had suddenly awakened, as it were, to her fascinations, and had straightway fallen in love with her.

For upwards of four years, Jenny Caerden had had sole charge of her father's poor cottage, together with a large brood of motherless brothers and sisters; and who can wonder that she was woefully weary and impatient, under the burden of her uncongenial surroundings? Who can wonder that she was anxious to better her lot? She was ambitious, and perhaps selfish. None knew better than she that her beauty ought to win for her a big prize in the shape of a husband, and she was resolved that it should do so. But handsome Clem Freer had crossed her path, and she was not long in making the discovery that, if she had a heart to lose, she had lost it to this, the most attractive of her admirers.

At this time Clem was in constant work and could have set up housekeeping comfortably—comfortably, that is to say, according to the ideas of the frugal folks amongst whom he dwelt. But Jenny shilly-shallied—hesitating to speak the word that would put an end to her freedom and to all her golden dreams.

For she knew she could do better for herself. There was wealthy Tom Penrose, the miller, for instance—she might have him for the holding up of her finger. There was Will Ashdown, the stalwart young smith, backed up by a well-paying occupation—she could win him away from Mary Seaton, with half-a-dozen words. There were others, too, more eligible even than these, but not one that could compare in manliness and good looks with Clem Freer—there was no one anywhere that could stand comparison with her Clem. So, in the end she consented to become his wife.

And, for a time, Earth was as a very Eden to the lovers. How proud was Clem of his new importance as an engaged man! How handsome the two looked as they walked on Sundays, side by side, to the old church in the High Street of Treverdale—Jenny, blushing and self-conscious—Clem,



elated, happy, and very compassionately disposed towards his less fortunate rivals !

"Eh, they'm a proper couple, for sure !" the old folks said as the lovers passed them by. "Wan woan't see a han'somer pair 'tween Treverdle and t' Land's End."

Clem and Jenny had agreed that they would get married as soon as, with the small sum the former had put by in the Savings Bank, they could arrange a little home for themselves. But "There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip." Times were not only hard, just then, but they were growing harder, day by day ; and, soon after the two were plighted to each other, it was found necessary to reduce the number of hands employed at the tin-mines. Rightly enough, too, it was the older and married men who were kept on ; and though Clem Freer was a good and steady workman, he was amongst those that were turned adrift.

As a matter of course, this untoward event postponed his marriage. There was a good deal of talk, however, about taking the discharged hands on again, by-and-by ; and by getting a job here and there, Clem managed for a while to leave his savings untouched. But this could not go on for long. He was compelled, as jobs grew scarcer, to trench on his small hoard, and on the evening when he was moved to offer Jenny her freedom, he had little more than enough left to take him to London.

As for Jenny—truth to tell, it had been in her mind, for some weeks past, to break off her engagement with Clem Freer. But, as has been said, she loved him as much as it was possible to her to love anyone, and when it came to the push, she could not bring herself to give him up.

"Awh, Clem," she sighed when, by the white flare of a lightning flash, she saw him disappear over the moor. "You'm t' best an' truest sawl as ever trod t' groun' ! Iss, you be ; an' I love 'ee, too—I do, i'deed. But things seem to go so agen us gitten' wed, an' I be proper weary o' waitin' for they to mend. But, there !—what's t' use o' worritin' 'bout 'em ? They 'ull go their own ways, 'spite o' wan, an' p'r'aps . . . Waal, who can tell whaat 'ull 'appen, byme-by ?"

Leaning idly against the woodwork of the porch, she stood a minute or so, apparently lost in some inward maze of thought. Then, heedless of her promise to go to bed "to wance," she stepped out to the road and turned her eyes towards the bridge.

"Clem said they was all up to 'T' Beaker,' she mused. "I wunner how long they 'm goin' to stop? 'Twould be rare fun to meet some o' they!" And after a moment's hesitation, she turned in-doors, caught up a red-plaid scarf, and arranging it becomingly about her head and shoulders, ran quickly up the street to the bridge, and took her stand on the spot where Clem had so lately stood.

And did no foreboding—no strange tremor of the heart—disturb her peace of mind as, leaning over the low parapet, she looked down into the silent waters flowing beneath her feet?

No;—she was not troubled by any such weak and creepy sensation. She only felt elated at the prospect of a little adventure—of a bit of heedless amusement, and when she heard footsteps nearing the bridge, she folded her hands on her bosom and gazed up at the quivering lightning, with an expression on her lovely face that made her appear angelic.

The approaching steps, however, were not those of him for whom she was posing—they were too quick and firm; and a feeling of impatient annoyance took possession of her, when Will Ashdown stood before her. But she was too thorough a coquette—too fond of having a string of lovers dangling after her, to let anything of her vexation appear. Moreover, admiration—come from whom it might, in masculine form—was essential to Jenny's happiness, and it made little difference to her that Will was engaged to her friend, Mary Seaton.

"Why, Jenny," exclaimed Will, with undisguised pleasure, "I scarce thought to see you, to-night, and alone too. I almost took you for a ghost. What brings you on the bridge?"

"Awh, I doan't know. 'Cos 'tis so hot in-doors, p'r'aps, an' so lonesome."

"Lonesome? You should never feel lonesome, Jenny Caerden, if—if I was something to you that I'm not, worse luck! Hasn't Freer been along yet?"

"Iss; un's bin along," with a pathetic sigh.

"He should have stayed and cheered you, then. He doesn't seem to know the value of the prize he treats so lightly!"

"Awh, un hadn't time to stay, chatt'rin'. 'Twas gettin' late an' un wanted to hurry aways home, afore t' storm comes up."

"He must be a brute or a fool, or both!"

"Lors, now, I woan't let 'ee say thaat, Will Ashden! Clem's very kind—mos' times."

"Most times! Jenny, if I stood in Clem Freer's shoes, do you think I would leave you—do you think any mortal consideration would induce me to leave you—when you were lonely and sad?"

"Awh, I'm sure I doan't know. But I woan't ha' 'ee talk rubbidge, Will Ashden. Now, do 'ee go your ways to Mary Seaton—her 'ull be wond'rin' whaat's become o' 'ee."

"Never mind about Mary Seaton—let me see you to your door. May I—dear? 'Tis time you were in."

"Waal, that ain't no bis'ness o' yours—Mr. Imperence," with a saucy little laugh. "I mean to wait on t' bridge an' look at t' lightnin', till faather comes alongs. 'Sides, I ain't i' t' mind for comp'ny to-night."

"Must I go, Jenny? Mayn't I stay with you, a little longer?"

"No. I feel i' t' dumps, an' I want to be quiet."

"You are very hard on a miserable fellow, but if I must go, I suppose I must. Good-night—my darling."

The term of endearment was spoken in a tender whisper, and taking her hand, he drew her—hesitatingly, at first, and then more boldly—towards himself, slipping his arm about her trim waist. True, she protested against his advance by feigning to struggle against it; but, since she laughed, half-encouragingly, as she made her show of resistance, returning his passionate glance with one of piquant defiance, he only grew the hotter, and bending over her, would have stolen from her lovely, tempting mouth, a plethora of ardent kisses.

But this was more than Jenny was prepared to concede, and Will was fain to content himself by pressing his burning lips, again and again, on her pretty, rounded wrist. Just then, too, a sound in the distance warned the girl that another was about to appear on the scene, and flinging her would-be lover off, she commanded him, with a stamp of her ill-shod but shapely foot to leave her—to leave her, instantly, or never dare speak to her again.

And Will, perceiving that, for some reason of her own, she was in serious and sober earnest, reluctantly went off home to the smithy—or rather to the house attached to it—a roomy dwelling on the edge of the moor, and some three minutes' walk past Jenny's cottage.

CHAPTER IV.

TOM PENROSE IS INSINUATIVE.

"A GREAT, silly stupid!" laughed Jenny, to herself, as Will Ashdown made his slow departure. "But, lors, what han'some eyes un's got, to be sure—a'most as han'some as Clem's. I wunner if un ever gives Mary sech looks as un did me?"

She had been rearranging the plaid scarf as she spoke — managing to reassume her devotional attitude by the time Tom Penrose limped on to the bridge and, in a high, piping voice, gave her "good-night."

"Lors, miller," she cried, with a pretty affectation of being startled, and turning quickly as if about to flee towards home, "whaat a turn 'ee did gi' me, to be sure! I didn't think to fin' anywan abroad, wi' a tempest comin' up."

"Oh, I doan't care for tempests nor for naught else," declared the miller, with a big air. "An' the tempest isn't comin' up, my maid—'tis dying away."

"Be it? I thought 'twas comin' up. But you'm so weather-wise an' clever, miller—o' course you 'ud knaw all 'bout it. Ha' 'ee seen faather anywheres up t' village? I wish un' 'ud come alongs, to home."

"Are you waiting hereabouts for faather, ducky-wucky?" chucking her under the chin.

"Iss. 'T least, I *ha'* bin waitin' for un, but I'm gettin' tired, now."

"What! ha'n't you bin waitin' for no wan else?—me, for instance?"

"Waitin' for *you*, miller! Awh, now, is't likely?"

"What's gone wi' Clem Freer, Jenny, maid?"

"Clem? Oh, un's bin gone 'cross t' moors, to home, more'n a hour ago."

"I wish he 'ud break his neck, crossing the moors! I hate him, wi' his infernal temper an' mighty airs! I shall knock him down for his sarce, some o' these days—I knaw I shall."

"Awh, now, doan't 'ee, miller," pleaded Jenny, flashing one contemptuous glance at the puny, bragging creature before her, and then lowering her eyes lest he should see the scathing scorn in their depths. "Doan't 'ee hurt Clem—for my sake."

"Waal, I 'ud hold off doing a lot o' things, for your sake, Jenny Caerden; but Clem Freer 'ud best see to hisself, when I'm by!" And looking mighty things, Tom Penrose swung, valiantly, the stout walking-stick that helped to make easier his halting steps.

"You'm so bold an' fierce, miller," sighed Jenny. "There ain't no tellin' whaat you 'ud do when you'm put out! But Clem's talkin' o' leavin' me, an' goin' aways up to Lon'on. 'Tis very hard for a maid to be left lonesum, an' her not knawin' a bit, whaat her's got to look for'ard to."

"Going to London? Clem Freer is?" cried the miller, gleefully. "Awh, an' a precious good job, too, I say! Come, now, doan't you agree wi' me, my little maid, eh?" ignoring the fact that the "little maid" was fully half a head taller than himself.

"You'm very cruel to think sech a thing, miller," sobbed Jenny, as she made a feint of wiping some non-existent tears from her eyes. "You—you ha'n't got no more feelin' for a maid's trouble than—than Clem hisself has."

"Oh, cuss Clem!—doan't liken me to him. But you'm wrong Jenny Caerden, if you think I ha'n't got any feeling for you, 'cos I have, my bonny bird. But Freer ain't a fit match for you, an' I doan't see what call you ha' got to fret about his leavin' you—unless 'tis you'm so fond o' he, you can't abear to let him out o' your sight."

"Awh, 'tisin't thaat, miller; but—but——"

"Waal, but what? 'Tis hard to be fast bound to a chaap that can't git bread an' cheese for hisself, let alone no wan else—I know that, o' course."

"Iss; thaats what I was goin' to say—an' he talking of leavin' me, too! But I doan't know, neither, as I be so fast boun' to Clem but whaat I could free myself if I chose to it."

"Maybe, then, you doan't choose—eh?" trying to peer into her downcast eyes.

"Waal, I can't abear to hurt no wan's feelin's, an' if Clem holds me to my 'gagement, 'twould scarce be right to think o' gettin' free o' it. 'Sides, 'tis a maid's place to be patient an' do as her's bid."

"That's true—I quite agree wi' you there, Jenny. But 'tis no feather in a maid's cap to be left lonesum while her baw goes, away up to London for a fling by hisself, an' her never knawin'

if he 'ull come back or no. There's no maid o' speret as 'ud stand it."

"No; but I ha'n't got much speret," sighed Jenny, meekly, feeling, the while, a strong desire to shake the breath out of the mean little creature's body. "But faather doan't seem to be comin' alongs, so I may as waal git aways to bed." And rising from the parapet where she had been sitting, she began walking slowly towards home—making no demur when Tom Penrose, instead of turning down by the river on his way to the Mill House, kept close to her side.

"Clem Freer's no right to hold you to a promise you'm weary of," declared the miller, as he limped along.

"Awh, I doan't know 'bout thaat, miller."

"He ha'n't no right to it, I say—more 'specially as he can't make no sort o' home for 'ee. Why, you ought to have a big place o' your own, like the Mill House, an' a pack o' maids to wait on you, hand an' foot, instead o' toilin' an' scrubbin' all day, as you 'ull have to do if you wed Clem Freer. You ought to have splendid silk dresses to flaunt before folks, instead o' goin' about wi' scarce a decent rag to your back—as is all Freer could gi' you. 'Twould be my joy an' pride to make a grand lady o' you, if I had the right to. My stars, what a proper misses you 'ud make down at the old Mill House!"

"Oh lors, where's t' use o' talkin' 'bout things that's never like to be?" cried Jenny, gratified by his flattery, yet fretted by her inability to encourage him to make a definite offer of the delights he pictured. "'Tis rubbidge an' mock'ry to talk so—rael mock'ry!"

"I don't see as 'tis, my maid," returned the miller. "Lord, what a dash I 'ud make you cut, if you was Mrs. Tom Penrose! However, I s'pose 'tisn't no use thinkin' o' it, since you'm tied so fast to Clem Freer. But ain't 'ee goin' to bid me step in, for a minnet?" as she paused outside her own door and held out her hand.

"I 'ud be proud to it, miller," said she, assuming an air of lofty virtue; "but I doan't ever bid menfolks step i'side t' cot, 'cept when faather or t' chil'ren be about."

"Awh, waal, I dessay you'm right. But," edging nearer to her and leering up into her face with an expression that made her fingers itch to lay a stinging slap on his cheek, "suppose you give me a kiss, instead—eh?"

"Lors, Miller Penrose," rebukingly, "ain't you ershamed o' yourself?—askin' for kisses as a maid ain't free to give?"

"Suppose you let me steal wan, then, my beauty?" pressing up close.

But, yielding for a moment to her growing disgust, the girl pushed him off with so little gentleness, that he reeled and, but for his stick, would have fallen. Recovering his equilibrium, however, he turned and began limping away—muttering some words that sounded a trifle blasphemous. But it was no part of Jenny's policy to send him from her in a huff, and her little spurt of temper over, she summoned him to return.

"Hi! miller," she called. "Come here—I want 'ee."

"Waal, what is it?" he asked, sulkily, but turning back and pausing within a few feet of her.

"Why, I want to gi' you this," holding up a spray of white jasmine she had pulled from the plant 'covering the porch. "'Tis a keepsake for 'ee." And laying loudly-audible kisses on the flowers, she tossed them to him—he, in turn, kissing and, with a great show of care, placing them inside his vest. Then, tempted by some subtle invitation in her bearing, he sprang towards her with as swift a movement as his lameness would allow; but she, laughing mockingly, flitted into the cottage and clapped the door in his face, just as he reached it.

"Waal an' good, my lady," he muttered as he limped away—her laugh ringing in his ears as he went. "I 'ull ha' you under my thumb yet, or I 'ull know the reason why; an' if I doan't make you pay—an' that roundly, too—for all your pretty tricks, my name isn't Tom Penrose!"

And Jenny, drawing back the bolt of the door, peeped out after his retreating figure; and setting her pretty white teeth together, she smiled a wicked little smile as she whispered to herself:

"Awh, you ugly little toad. I b'lieve I detest 'ee—iss, I raelly b'lieve I do! Enyways, 'ee doan't git no kiss o' mine, till—till—But, there!—I doan't mane nothin' pertic'ler; only, if ever I do git t' chance to it, *woan't* I lead 'ee a life! My! woan't I though, to be sure. But faugh!—I couldn't abear to wed sech as he—no, not even to be misses o' t' Mill House an' ha' nought to do, all day, 'cept make myself smart. 'T least, I doan't *think* I could."

CHAPTER V.

IN THE SMITHY KITCHEN.

THE kitchen of the quaint old house attached to the smithy at the lower end of the High Street of Treverdale, was a pleasant, roomy apartment at all times, and since Mary Seaton had come to live with ailing Mrs. Ashdown—Will's mother—it had worn even an air of refinement. Under her orderly rule, every article in it seemed to be in its right place. Its floor and dresser presented almost the whiteness and polish of ivory, while in the deep bow-window, pots of gaily-blossoming plants were varied by jars of fresh-cut flowers.

Mary, herself, was a pretty, slim, fair-haired girl, in the quiet depths of whose soft, grey eyes, truth and goodness were plainly discernible. She had become engaged to Will Ashdown, some fifteen months back, when the latter was in London working at his own trade, with a relative; and her mother dying soon afterwards, Mary had been glad to accept old Mrs. Ashdown's proposal that she should come down to Treverdale and help her with her housekeeping.

For fully a year after this event, Will had kept up a tender correspondence with gentle Mary, and she had been as happy as a girl could be, who is looking forward with pleasure to a speedy marriage with the man she loves. But some three months prior to the opening of this story, old Mr. Ashdown, the village blacksmith, had died, and Will had returned to Treverdale, to take his father's vacated place at the forge; and since that day, a cloud had been creeping over the sunshine of Mary Seaton's life.

For, on the bright May afternoon that had witnessed Will's home-coming, Jenny Caerden had dropped in to take tea with Mary, and to see, as she said, what the latter's much talked-of and belauded lover was like. She had done her utmost in the way of self-adornment—in honour of the occasion, as she explained—and Will had been perceptibly struck by her beauty and winning charm of manner.

He spoke no word to Mary of any alteration in his feelings for herself, and, as a rule, he was as gentle with her as of old—perhaps more so; but, though it had been the main theme of

his long and loving letters, while he had been in London and she in Treverdale, he never now alluded to their marriage.

She had no suspicion that anything like a flirtation was going on between Jenny Caerden and Will, but she was not slow to discover the cause of the latter's defection. Knowing, too, how liberally Jenny was endowed with the sort of seductiveness

"That bewitches,
And leads men into pools and ditches,"

she was not *very* much surprised at the change in him.

But though she could not avoid seeing that Jenny had many faults, she was too pure-hearted herself to suspect her of deliberately planning the theft of a friend's lover; and, though she knew—as most of her neighbours seemed to know—that Jennie was "flirty," she believed her to be too sincerely attached to handsome Clem Freer to lay herself out for the admiration of other men. True, Clem had become poor, but that fact would not have weighed a pin's point with Mary Seaton; and she had yet to learn that it might have its weight with beautiful Jenny Caerden.

There is little to be wondered at, then, if Mary's face began to betray the sorrow she was so anxious to hide away in her heart. But it is said that love can hope where reason would despair, and the slighted girl strove to persuade herself that her lover would return to his allegiance when his eyes should be freed from the glamour now beclouding them.

With a brave smile, then, and a few pleasant words, she looked up as Will came in, after his unsatisfactory interview with Jenny, on the bridge; and, laying aside the needlework on which she had been engaged, she moved her lamp to a table which she had already covered with a snowy cloth and had set for two.

"I've got a nice supper for you, Will," she said. "We cut a fresh ham this morning, mother and I, and I thought you would like to try some, with a poached egg. Mother's had her gruel and gone to bed; but," placing a pan on a bright bit of fire in a big open range, "I wouldn't get yours ready till you came in. Ham and eggs spoil so, if they stand."

"All right, Mary," returned Will. "I'm in no hurry and I'm not very hungry." And seating himself at the open window, he gazed out over the lightning-lit moors.

Only a few weeks ago, he would have found unalloyed

pleasure in watching Mary, as, with quick and skilful hands, she prepared his supper; but now, he was better satisfied to gaze out into the night and to think of Jenny Caerden.

He knew he was behaving badly to Mary, and he told himself that he was a knave and a fool for suffering his infatuation to get the better of his judgment. For he read Jenny's character pretty well aright, and he knew it to be far from perfect. But her very faults seemed to fascinate and attract him; and, anyhow, he was a willing slave to the spell she had wound around him.

Guessing something of the struggle through which he was passing, Mary pitied even while she blamed him, and noting the moody misery of his face as he ate his supper, she strove with loving anxiety to ease his pain by leading him to speak of its cause.

"I was up at the general-shop this afternoon," she remarked, "and Mrs. Stanford was talking quite sentimentally about Mr. Caerden. I do wish she would marry him, if only for Jenny's sake. Poor girl! she is so tired of the children, and if there was someone else to look after them, she would be free to go to service till Clem Freer gets into work again."

"Oh, she's not fit for service," growled Will. "A girl like her ought to have something better than that to turn to."

"Yes; but one can't always get what one ought to have," said Mary, a sharp pang at her heart, as she reflected that service alone would be her own portion if Will should really prove false. "Jenny's not very fond of work either," she went on, "and I doubt whether anyone about here would care to give her a trial."

"And why not, pray?" demanded Will, a trifle fiercely.

"Oh, I hardly know," returned Mary, avoiding a more definite explanation of her remark. "She's very clever at making up pretty bonnets and hats out of almost nothing, and she can make an old gown look quite trim and new, with just a bit of ironed-out lace or ribbon. That's how she comes to look so smart and nice, always; and a lady wanting a maid that's clever at such things, might be glad to take her."

"Oh, well, there'll be time enough to think about that, when her father finds he can do without her at home. Maybe, too, she'll get married herself, before then."

"I'm sure I hope she will," said Mary, beginning to feel vexed with herself for having turned the conversation into its present channel. "I should be very glad to see Clem Freer in work again and they two comfortably settled."

"Freer's not half good enough for her," remarked Will, shortly.

"P'raps not; but," with a piece of excusable malice, "a girl doesn't think of that, when she lets her heart out of her own keeping; and though Jenny does many things one can't think quite right, she cares for Clem Freer as she'll never care for anyone else."

"I don't know of anything she does that isn't right," said Will, forgetting that he knew her conduct, if only as regarded himself, to be decidedly wrong. "As for her mighty fondness for Freer—I doubt it."

"Ah, but you don't know Jenny Caerden as well as I do, Will," asserted Mary; "and I'm sure if she's truly fond of anyone, she's fond of Clem Freer."

"I can't see how you can know anything about it."

"Well, I ought to, for I don't think Jenny has a single thought she doesn't share with me."

"How? What sort of thoughts?" glancing up with a quick, startled look, and as quickly dropping his eyes on his plate again.

"Oh," with a little pained laugh, "only about Clem Freer. You may think what you like, Will, but I'm certain Jenny's heart is Clem's. We've grown to be friends, Jenny and me, and there's few I would hear say a word against her; but she's over fond of ease and pleasure, and I should never be surprised if she threw over the man she loves for one that can give her the things she pines for."

"Girls don't throw over the fellows they love," said Will, oracularly. "If she casts Freer off, it will be because she's found out that she likes someone else better. And she'd be quite right, too, according to my ideas."

"Well, you know I agree with you most times, Will," said Mary, "but I don't agree with you, now. But I haven't seen Jenny for some weeks past—I've been so busy with the preserves and pickles, that I haven't had time to get out much, and she hasn't dropped in as she used to. I must run up and ask what's the reason of it."

"I shouldn't do anything of the sort if I were you," said Will. "Leave her to come or not, as she likes."

"No, I won't do that," declared Mary, yielding to a feeling of perversity. "I'll run up to-morrow, and see why she hasn't been in so long. She may be thinking I ought to."

It was evident, however, that Will did not approve of her determination; for, though he spoke no further protest, he pushed back his chair with an angry jerk, and rising from the table, returned to his seat in the window, leaving Mary to clear away the supper, without a word or a look. And she, giving him an anxious glance now and then, as she went about her homely work, blamed herself for having strayed so far from her intention—for having vexed rather than soothed him; and it was with a very meek, "Good-night, Will," that she prepared to leave the room when the duties of the day were at last all done.

But his response (as if, forsooth, it was he who had cause for complaint!) was spoken in a decidedly sullen tone. As, however, Mary, with drooping mien, was slowly disappearing, some better impulse seized him, and springing to his feet, he strode after her. Catching her in his arms, he folded her to his breast with such passionate roughness, that her slight form was in danger of being crushed by it.

"God bless you, Mary," he murmured, with something like a sob. "I am not worthy of you, dear, I am not worthy of you. God bless and comfort you, my poor little girl!"

Pressing a long kiss on her lips, he put her hastily outside the door—closing it upon her before she had sufficiently recovered from her surprise to return his caress. For this was the only really tender kiss he had given her since the day of his return to Treverdale, and Mary, when she found herself in the solitude of her pretty, lavender-scented bedroom, sought relief for the pent-up sorrows of her heart, in an unwonted flood of half-bitter, half-happy tears.

(To be continued.)

BELGRAVIA

JUNE, 1893.

Found Wanting.*

By MRS. ALEXANDER.

Author of "THE WOOING O'T," "A WOMAN'S HEART," "BLIND FATE,"
"FOR HIS SAKE," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XII.

"AT AUDELEY CHASE."

THOUGH still shadowed by the sense of awe and distress which had fallen upon her, with the sudden shock of her father's most unexpected death, May was fast recovering her tranquillity and courage.

She was always happy with Madame Falk, and the quaintness of their country quarters charmed her. The partners lodged in an old farm house of a better sort, to which was attached a mill, turned by a stream. It was situated in a valley a few miles from Rouen, and was altogether different from any place she had ever seen before. The valley was somewhat damp, but in the summer heat that did not signify. It was deliciously fresh and green. The sparkle of the water rushing over the wheel, the straight solemn rows of poplars which bordered the bye road leading to the mill, the poultry which at certain hours trooped from the yard across a corner of the orchard on one side of the house to the water, the fat, broad-backed, nearly white old horse that browsed under the apple trees, formed a picture of restful content, that made May long for the artistic power to put it permanently on canvas. Then, when she had a couple of hours

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to spare, Madame Falk would order the old horse to be harnessed to a very antiquated rusty calèche, and drive May into Rouen (she could put her hand to anything), where they enjoyed examining the beautiful old churches, the Palais de Justice, and other relics of old days.

It was a period of peace which enabled May to gather her forces for the battle which she told herself lay before her. Sometimes a sudden sense of her complete isolation would strike her with a shuddering fear: was ever any creature so divested of kith and kin as herself? Her only relative, her uncle, had written a very decided refusal to acknowledge her in any way, as he had been for years on bad terms with her father. Therefore, so far as family ties went, she was absolutely alone. But she reflected, trying to rouse her courage, she had friends which are better than relations, and she had youth!

It pleased her to return to England. In truth, she had been far happier at school there, than she had ever been with her father, and she would be in the same country, perhaps in the same town with Ogilvie, round whom her hopes for future happiness were unconsciously gathering. Had any girl ever before had so delightful a friend, so wise, so steady, so considerate? Superior as he was in all ways, she could say anything to him, all her early timidity in his presence had melted away, in her instinctive recognition of the profound interest he took in her. Could any feeling, any attachment in the world, be so sweet, so satisfying, as the delicious friendship he had given her, and which he deserved from her! Life must always be full of charm while this lasted, and it would last.

A letter from Ogilvie was the only thing needful to crown this soft-grey dawn of a new phase in her existence but suffused with the rose of coming sunshine, and he did not disappoint her. It was not long, yet it said a great deal, and reminded her of her promise to let him know her movements. He also wrote to Madame Falk, telling her that he was going to the Highlands on a short visit to some relations, and should not forget his ward, as he had established the habit of calling her, should he fall in with any rich, halt, blind or maimed dowager.

The time for leaving the peaceful little valley came all too quickly. But if May dreaded the grandeur of Audeley Chase, she also longed to be in England, longed to be launched in some

humble career, which would enable her to maintain herself; and that Ogilvie would find this for her, she never doubted.

She was very sorry to say good-bye to her good friends. Never had Miss Barton been so amiable. She had refrained almost altogether from acidulated remarks, and "Ivan," the beloved cat, whom Madame Falk had brought with her, as there was no one left in the entresol to care for him, had been very loving to the "favoured guest" at the Mill.

Madame Falk insisted on escorting May as far as Dieppe, and seeing her safe on board the steamer.

"You will have a long, tiresome wait, my dear," she said as they stood on the deck, having secured a berth. "I am afraid they will not get off till two o'clock, and you will not be at Victoria till ten to-morrow morning. I wish you had some one with you! Make up to that nice-looking, exceedingly English old maid—I am sure she is an old maid—she may be useful to you; are you sure you are quite equal to calling a cab, and driving across to the Midland Station? A porter will get you one, don't give him more than sixpence."

"I am not at all afraid, dear Madame Falk. I speak my own language, and I have money enough."

"That's right! Be sure you send me a card to-morrow morning, and go straight away to the Midland, you can get some breakfast there. God bless you, my dear child! I hope you will come and stay with me again. If we could only find something for you to do in Paris—but there! I must go back to the Town station. I'll sit in the waiting-room till the early market train starts to Rouen. God bless you, dear."

It was rather appalling being thus left alone in a crowd of strangers. This was indeed being cut adrift, and May could not keep back a few tears. But she was very tired, and following the advice given her by her friend, she partially undressed, and lay down in her berth, and dropped asleep before the steamer put off.

The night, or rather the early morning, was calm but foggy, and their progress slow. It was a dreary journey, but May met with no misadventure, rather with help and courtesy from her fellow passengers. It cheered her to hear English spoken on all sides, though a little puzzling, after being plunged for nearly six years in French. The sense of loneliness grew stronger as she

approached the Metropolis, and she shrank from the idea of her solitary drive across the mighty town.

Now she was crossing the wide river. How wonderfully different everything looked from what she was accustomed to, and how little blue sky was discernible! Now the speed was slackening, they were running under a glass roof much blackened by smoke, they were alongside the platform, a porter holding on to the luggage; a few people stood about evidently waiting for friends, a gentleman came out from among them, some one she knew; was it, could it be?—yes, it *was* Mr. Ogilvie.

"Oh, how kind and good of you to come! I am *so* glad! I thought you were in Scotland."

"I considered it my duty to see you safe off to Audeley Chase," he returned, handing her out of the carriage. "You have had a good crossing? You look quite fresh, and less pale than when we parted," gazing at her with the searching glance he rarely permitted himself. "Let us get your luggage, and then you will breakfast with me at the hotel."

"Thank you very much; but Madame Falk said I was to drive across to the Midland Station at once."

"Madame Falk did not know that I was coming to meet you."

"No, of course not," returned May, quite satisfied to stay.

"I have ordered breakfast, and I am very hungry," added Ogilvie, with a brief, pleasant smile.

To such reasoning there could be no reply. The luggage found, and consigned to the "Left luggage" place, Ogilvie led his ward into the hotel, where breakfast was laid in a private room, and consigned her to the care of a chambermaid, that she might make her toilet in comfort.

How grand and beautiful everything seemed to her! What a guardian angel Ogilvie was! Her return to her native land had, indeed, begun gloriously.

"Your train is at 12.50 from St. Pancras," said Ogilvie, as they took their places. "We may have nearly two hours to talk, which is not to be despised," and as he spoke it struck May that he was really very glad to see her, and that he looked younger than he had ever seemed before.

Then followed a delightful repast. Led by a few well-put queries, May described her stay with Madame Falk minutely,

dwelling warmly on the great kindness of both cousins. Ogilvie listened with an air of interest which carried her on.

"Do you know," he said, when she paused, "that you have rather remarkable descriptive powers!"

"And do *you* know, Mr. Ogilvie, that it is very rude of a guardian to laugh at his ward!" she returned, smiling.

"But I am not laughing," he exclaimed. "I speak my real conviction."

May shook her head.

"Believe it or not, as you like," he added. "Take some strawberries. Fruit is always best at breakfast. And—are you sure you would like better to live in England than in Paris?"

"In some ways, yes; though I should like always to be near Madame Falk."

"Apart from that attraction, for you cannot have everything, you would prefer England? Even London?"

"Yes, certainly. What I especially want is to earn something for myself. I do not wish to live on the charity, even of the most generous."

"I understand that," said Ogilvie, thoughtfully.

"You said you thought you could help me." May hesitated a little over the words.

"I did, May. I have not forgotten. I still have the same plan in view, but you must leave it entirely to me."

"Of course I shall. I leave everything to you."

She raised her eyes as she spoke, and was struck by the sombre intensity of his.

"Your confidence is not misplaced," he said in a low tone. "Tell me, how long are you going to stay with the Conroys?"

"I do not exactly know—as long as I like—two or three months, that would be long enough?" looking at him enquiringly.

"It would do very well," he said, answering the look.

"Shall you come to the Chase, Mr. Ogilvie? I know Mr. Conroy asked you."

"No, May; not this autumn. I have many engagements." Since her father's death it had drawn them so strangely near each other, he had always called her "May."

"I suppose you are always greatly engaged?" she said.

"Well, yes; a good deal. Don't imagine, however, that my

engagements are festive or social. They are chiefly hard business matters."

"Still, their reality must give them great interest."

"Profound!" returned Ogilvie, and grew suddenly silent.

The next moment he roused himself, and drew his companion on to speak of herself, her tastes, her ideas of the future, her few hopes; and though she was brighter than when he parted from her last, he could see how permeated her heart and soul were, with the sense of her own insignificance and loneliness. He managed, however, to impress on her a conviction that she was of importance to him. He gave his address in Scotland, and begged her to keep him informed as to her life with the Conroys.

"I hope they will not have a very large party," said May, with a sigh. "I feel half afraid of a number of people."

"That is only the remains of the nervous weakness brought on by the terrible shock you have sustained. And, pray remember, your deep mourning gives you the right to stay in your room if any extra festivity is expected. But your own tact will counsel you better than I can."

"I am afraid not, Mr. Ogilvie," she was beginning, when she suddenly glanced at the clock. "Oh, is it not late—I must not lose the train."

"Do not fear. I have been keeping watch. I do not intend you to lose the train, I assure you. You had better put on your hat, perhaps, though we have plenty of time."

Was it possible they had been talking for nearly two hours? Then came the drive to St. Pancras, it seemed wonderfully short.

"Oh, Mr. Ogilvie!" cried May, with a sudden spasm of memory. I promised to post a card to dear Madame Falk, and I had almost forgotten—I am ashamed of myself."

"You can write one at the station. I will get one for you," said Ogilvie, smiling.

Having deposited his charge in the waiting-room, he went to see to the labelling of the luggage, and returned with the card, placed a chair for her near a huge blotter and a nearly dried-up ink-bottle.

"Before you write I must tell you that I am supposed to be in Scotland; my being here instead, is on account of some diplomatic business, and I must ask you to say nothing of having met me, either to Madame Falk or the Conroys."

May looked up a little surprised. "Oh! very well! I am glad you told me," then she quickly traced a few lines to the effect that she had had a very prosperous journey and now wrote from the Midland Station, whence she would soon start. "Will that do?" she asked, showing it to Ogilvie.

"Perfectly! you write a remarkably firm hand. It is not the sort of writing one would expect from you. I always remark that to myself, when I get your letters."

"I don't suppose I am firm, though," returned May reflectively, as she drew on her glove.

"You do not know what you are yet," said Ogilvie smiling.

"Perhaps I never may; but I am not a child, Mr. Ogilvie."

"No, that you are not, you are every inch a woman; all you lack is experience, and that will come soon, *too* soon. I don't imagine that even in your infancy you were a thoughtless child. By-the-way, do you think you could translate? If so, I think I could get you some work."

"I could only translate French, which I imagine everyone can read now, and I am not sure I could translate into really good English."

"We shall see. Now I must let you go! Your journey will not be much more than four hours. I am, I assure you, quite sorry to part with my—may I call you my pupil?"

"You may indeed, you have taught me a great deal," looking gratefully into his eyes. Ogilvie smiled.

"Perhaps it is a case of reciprocity," he said.

"Ah, that is not likely," returned May, shaking her head.

"Time is up, I must get you some papers to help you through your hours of imprisonment." He led her to a first-class carriage.

"But, Mr. Ogilvie, I was to travel by second——"

"You are to do what your guardian desires," he interrupted, "you will have the carriage all to yourself; unluckily this is a slow train, but, 'per contra' very few going as far as Kingsford travel by it."

He disappeared, but soon returned with various illustrated publications. Then he held her hand for a minute. "I shall see you before long, and mind you let me know your impressions of English country life."

"You may be sure I will! Good-bye! thank you very much for your great kindness."

The guard's whistle warned him to step back, and the next moment she had lost sight of him, and was fairly plunged into the unknown.

May did not open her papers for a considerable time, she was too much absorbed by her gratitude for Ogilvie's great goodness in taking so much trouble about her. How differently she felt on this second stage of her journey from the desolation which overwhelmed her when she parted with Madame Falk the night before! she felt "strong and of a good courage" now that she was so assured of Ogilvie's thoughtful friendship. He would take care of her, in the way she most desired, by finding her work. There was that about him that was expressive of power, of a reserved force which no one could exactly measure. "But even on him I must not lean too much, I must not burden him in any way; a certain degree of equality is the essence of friendship! But how little I can do!—yet I can learn. I wonder what plan he has in his head for me? He has one I am sure! I am fortunate to have such a friend!"

She was indeed amazed at her own good spirits, and a little ashamed of them.

In truth her father was no real loss to her. The incident of his desertion of her in her dangerous illness, had so soon given her the key to his character, that it brought a discordant note into their intercourse which she could not away with; she could not shut her eyes to his selfishness, his petty untruthfulness, his sham existence! and now, having utterly forgiven the painful past, the kindest course was not to think of him at all.

It was a glorious afternoon when she reached her destination. Glowing golden sunshine bathed the landscape; the trees and fields had put on their richest, deepest green, the roads were dry and white, and May, wearied out with dust and heat, felt suddenly revived when she recognised Frances and Mr. Conroy on the platform as the train came to a stand at the little station.

"Ah May! delighted to see you! Had a tolerable journey?" cried Mr. Conroy in joyous tones, as he shook hands heartily with her.

"So glad, dear May!" said Frances, embracing her with unusual warmth. "You look so pale and tired! What luggage have you? Tell Peters, he will attend to it, and we will drive up to the house at once."

Instructions having been given to an elderly groom, Frances put her arm through her friend's, and they passed through the station to the space behind, all persons raising hats, touching caps, or dropping curtseys as the great Miss Herbert Conroy passed, a new experience for May.

A pretty low phaeton and a pair of beautiful brown ponies were waiting for the heiress and her friend, the reins held by the smartest of grooms, while a boy held a fine grey hunter, evidently aged, who pricked up his ears as Mr. Conroy approached. He asked affectionately for Madame Falk, and made further inquiries as to May's travels. "You know we thought some friends of Esther's would have been travelling over with you, or we would have sent some one to meet you."

"Thank you very much. I got on very well indeed; you know I speak the language," said May, smiling, and she stepped into the little carriage.

"I am bound in an opposite direction, we'll meet at dinner; you are our only guest at present."

Frances took her seat, the ponies pawed the ground impatiently, the groom jumped up behind, and they were off at a rattling pace, so fast indeed that May held on very tightly. "Do you always go so fast, Frances?"

"Oh, the ponies are very fresh, they will settle down presently."

The country was rather flat, but rich, and, in the direction towards which they were going, thickly wooded. It struck May that there was an air of cheerfulness and comfort about the cottages and hamlets, by which they passed in their six-mile drive, that seemed different from the aspect of the country round Paris, of which she had a few rare glimpses; but she was a little dazed by the complete newness of everything.

Audeley Chase was a fine old place. That portion near the much-patched and added-to original Tudor house was perhaps too much embowered in trees, but at less than half a mile's distance began an open space of heather and fern, grass, rocks, and occasional clumps of trees, which was the real Chase. Immediately round the house were mossy green lawns and pleasure-grounds, kept to a pitch of perfection which astonished the young visitor—conservatories were fitted in to several of the angles of the quaint old house, and a peacock strutted on a terrace on which the principal rooms opened.

"To think of three people having all that great house to themselves!" thought May as they stopped at the wide flight of low steps leading to the open entrance door. Yet the whole place was more lovely and delightful than grand or stately.

Within there were numerous passages richly carpeted and abounding in carved oak, bronzes, china, old pictures, and all that could delight the eye. Through one of these May was led to Mrs. Conroy's private sitting-room, a charming apartment with delicate pale grey walls, on which hung choice landscapes in water-colour; it opened into a conservatory and thence a few steps led into the grounds.

Here the lady of the house received her guest, with her usual gentle kindness, touched by the tender sympathy she felt for a young creature so curiously denuded of all family ties. "I am very glad to see you, my dear child, and I hope you will stay as long as ever you like," she said, kissing her brow. "Frances greatly needs a young companion, and I don't think she cares for any girl except yourself. Now Frances, take her to her room and order some tea there; I shall not expect to see either of you till dinner time."

May was deeply moved by this kindly greeting, she could hardly keep back her tears or command her voice.

"She needs rest, Frances," she added in a low voice.

"Yes, no doubt; she never was strong! Come, May dear."

At last Miss Conroy—after administering tea, and a good deal of information touching her own doings in the past and plans for the future—left her friend to rest, and for some time May kept perfectly still on the sofa, from which she could see through the open window, over the lawn beneath, to the background of beautiful foliage which shut it in.

She had never seen so charming a bed-room before. The chintz hangings, the elegance of the furniture, though simple and light, the long glass, the endless appliances for comfort and convenience, the delicious scent of flowers from within and from without, seemed to her too much beauty and luxury for any mere mortal. And there were many houses like this scattered through beautiful England! Musing on the extraordinary difference between her own life and that of her friend, she gradually fell into a light sleep.

From this she was roused by a loud but not unmelodious ringing ; at the sound Frances entered the room.

"It is the dressing bell," she said. "I hope you have had a nice sleep? I will send Hortense (you remember my maid, Hortense, in Paris?) to unpack your things ; she was so pleased to hear you were coming."

"Oh, thank you, Frances! I can do everything for myself."

"You must let Hortense help you this time. It is not necessary to make much of a toilette, we are quite alone and will be till next week."

"I have very little of what you call toilette to make," said May.

"Quite enough, I daresay—I will come for you when I am ready myself."

Dinner was served in a large dining-room, like a baronial hall, full of carved oak furniture, curious blue china, pictures and all kinds of suitable decorations.

The Squire took in his wife, leaving the young ladies to follow arm-and-arm. May thought how well suited Mr. Conroy looked to be at the head of such an establishment, and withal there was a homely heartiness in his kind attentions and hospitality that the humblest might be at home with him. Dinner over, the master of the house proposed that they should take their coffee on the terrace—much to May's satisfaction.

"You see I can have my cigar out there without offence," he said, with a nod to May, as he put his wife's lace shawl round her. "I know Madame does not like tobacco in her dining-room—though she is obliged to put up with it when some young fellows are here."

"This is pleasant, hey, Miss Riddell?" he resumed as he watched the curling smoke when they were settled in comfortable basket-chairs round a small table, which had been set forth by the butler, assisted by a magnificent "Jeames." "You couldn't do this in Paris, charming as people find it?"

"No, indeed," exclaimed May. "The wonder is to me that you can ever tear yourselves away from so delightful a home."

"Ay—so do I, that is quite my idea. There is no place like the Chase to me."

"Yes, it is sweet, I know," said Frances, "and for a while it is very well, but one's faculties grow paralysed here. There is no mental friction—no mental life. I must say that much as I love

the Chase I could not support existence without a visit to the Continent—a peep at Paris every year. I think I like Paris better than London, I seem to know my way about better.”

“Well, I do not like any town except for a short spell,” returned the Squire. “I don’t care for Frenchmen—very good fellows, I dare say, but I don’t understand them. By the way, you saw Ogilvie just before he left Paris?”

Mrs. Conroy looked warningly at her husband—she feared the mention of his name would bring back too painful associations—but May was glad to speak of him, and answered steadily:

“We saw him nearly every day. I cannot tell you how good he was, how thoughtful! I do not know what I should have done without him, nor Madame Falk either. She was like a mother to me—but then she knows French people chiefly—now all the people in authority, French and English, knew Mr. Ogilvie and attended to what he said.”

“True. He’s a very rising man—ought to go into parliament—a right good fellow too! glad he was so useful to you, my dear. I wish you would ask him to come here for a little shooting on his way back from Scotland” (to his wife). “He is in Scotland, isn’t he?”

“He was going there, he said, the last time he wrote to Madame Falk,” replied May, a faint colour rising in her cheek at the prevarication.

“Is he not Scotch?” asked Mrs. Conroy.

“His family is. But he himself is a thorough English gentleman,” said the Squire.

“May,” said Frances, “am I selfish and unreasonable if I ask are you too tired to try over some of our old songs? I liked your accompaniments so much!”

“Yes, Frances,” put in her mother, “you are both. I think vocal music must jar——”

“No, dear Mrs. Conroy,” interrupted May. “I am quite ready to play for Frances. It has done me so much good to come, but to-night I am dull and tired and——”

“By George! you shall go to bed as soon as the light is gone,” cried the Squire.

“I am too thoughtless!” said Frances. “Come, May, we will stroll round the lawn, there is a pretty peep of our old church through the trees at the other side.”

CHAPTER XIII.

"SOME LETTERS."

"Glendaroch, August 17, 18—

"DEAR MAY—

"It is nearly a fortnight since I heard from you, let me have a report of your proceedings soon. Your last two letters have been as brief as my own. Pray remember that although I am too overdone with correspondence to write at length to anyone, that is no reason why I should not like to read what you have to say.

"Very glad you are happy with the Conroys, they are excellent people; I am sorry I cannot accept their invitation. I am obliged to go on a special mission to Marsilles, and shall get very little shooting this season, as I must hurry away to meet H. in London on the 23rd. I shall be in town again in Oct. certainly, and hope to arrange the plan I have spoken of, for I am sure your present contentment is only provisional. Any news of Madame Falk?

"Always your sincere friend and guardian,

"PIERS OGILVIE."

"Moulin des Bois, près Rouen,

"August 20, 18—

"DEAREST MAY,—

"You *are* good to write so often in return for my rare scattered scraps. I assure you both Sarah and I enjoy your accounts of life at Audeley Chase; to me they are specially interesting, as I know it well; some of my happiest childish days were spent there. Oh! so long ago! But my memory of it does not present me with the picture of perfection you describe. In my day, except for a narrow ring round the house, the grounds were a wilderness, the gardens an unpruned mass of vegetation, the house an old curiosity shop of faded furniture and worn carpets. I cannot say how it rejoices me to hear that the dear old place is restored to more than its pristine glory, and still more to know that, with a large fortune, Herbert secured so sweet a wife. Certainly few men deserved one so well. He is the best man I ever met, and after him comes Mr. Ogilvie. I wish

Frances would marry one of the various 'desirables' you mention as hovering round her. Matrimony would cure her of her fads, which must be funny. She is rather a puzzle to me. She is certainly kind and considerate for others, yet, we must admit, a good deal taken up with herself. Wealth and indulgence have spoiled her just a little. You see we still stay on here. I do not know when I had such a long delightful spell of the country ; the reason I can stay is that I made great friends with a delightful old advocate to whom I was able to do a good turn (a journalistic turn, you understand). He is one of the Directors of the Chemin de L'ouest and he has given me a pass, so I can run to and fro to Paris, which is a great help. My advocate knew Flaubert and others, his intimates, very well. He talks delightfully about them. He rides out sometimes (on such a droll pony) and takes coffee with us. Sarah makes a great deal of him, and you know how difficult *she* is! We go back to Paris the first week in September, and shall always have a '*gite*' for you when you want to come. I think I could find something for you to do, but take my advice, stay where you are until I can take a good look round, for employment is not easy to discover. I have almost forgotten to say I had quite a long letter from Mr. Carr. He writes from—where do you think? Warsaw! He seems roaming about very indefinitely. He had only heard of your poor father's death just before, and appeared greatly shocked. He enquires very kindly for you. Sarah sends her love, so would dear Ivan if he knew our language. By-the-way, Sarah hopes you will not adopt extravagant habits and ideas, she thinks her countrymen the greatest spendthrifts on earth.

" Good-bye, dear child,

" Always your attached friend,
" ESTHER FALK."

" Rue C—,
" August 23, 18—

" BELOVED CHILD,—

" How faithful you are, to remember your poor little old friend, amid the splendour of your surroundings. It is a true pleasure to read your charming letters and see with your eyes the new scenes you describe. I am indeed rejoiced that you have found so excellent an asylum, but, my little one, you must

not count on it as a permanent sojourn. Human nature is frail and variable, few possess the constancy which would make a dependent, however charming and estimable, welcome for always ; therefore dear child let me offer you a little word of counsel. If among the gentlemen who frequent the hospitable château where you dwell, one seeks you in marriage (which is not improbable, befriended as you are by the most distinguished family of the neighbourhood), do not refuse him ; unless indeed advised to do so by one who knows him on account of his want of fortune or his indifferent character. An established house, a legal protector, are enormous advantages ; though one be small, and the other more or less plain, it matters little. You have none of the boldness which shows itself in the generality of English young ladies ; you are incapable of wishing to be in love before you are irrevocably united to your husband. Then the sense of common interest, and an indissoluble tie, gives each interest in the eyes of the other, from which a tender friendship will, in well-regulated minds, assuredly arise ! Think of your friend's advice, my little one, and pardon my frankness.

“ For myself, my small affairs go not so badly ; at present my pupils disperse themselves to the four quarters of the earth, but I feel sure of several who will return, and have hope of many new ones. I have felt encouraged to take a sleeping-chamber on the second floor. It is very suitable, with an alcove, and a stove on which I can even cook a little dish, as I hope my dear child will see, for you will come to Paris, will you not ? and perhaps bring M. le Mari with you ? Think always of the future, *ma petite chatte*. My health has been miserable, alas ! nervous attacks, the result of a too delicate organisation rendering me at times incapable of movement ! and as you know the *concierge* of this house is a woman of the worst disposition ; *intrigante* to the nails of her fingers, insolent, false, everything that is the worst. She irritates me in a manner not to be described, and I suffer. Heavens ! how I suffer ! but I cannot permit myself to say more. Those ladies at No. 13 have not returned, and a new family, the widow of a late official in the *Ministère de Finance* has taken your *entresol*. Alas ! the tears come to my eyes when I pass the door. Adieu, my sweet young friend,

“ Your devoted,

“ THERESE PERRET.”

This last effusion came in a huge square envelope, with a fifteen centime stamp, and May had to pay five pence for it ; but what pleasure it gave her ! What pleasure all three letters gave her ! To be so kindly remembered and wished for, why should she trouble about her lonely position when she thus lived in the hearts of her absent friends ?

"Is that a warrant from a secretary of state ?" asked Mr. Conroy, who as usual distributed the letters at breakfast-time, noticing the size of the foreign envelope.

"No ! It is from my good friend Mademoiselle Perret ! You have seen Mademoiselle Frances ?"

"Yes, I remember, a very little woman, but an excellent musician ; she had been a pupil of Garcia's, I believe, and her style is thoroughly Italian."

"It is ! She is such a dear good soul, you will be amused with the epistle by-and-by, Frances."

No more was said then, for there were several visitors at table, and May waited to re-read and enjoy her letters until she was in her own room.

There had been for nearly a month a succession of visitors chiefly men, staying in the house, and the results were less agreeable to May than might be imagined.

According to the ethics of Romance, the attractive, graceful dependent ought to have proved irresistible to the male members of the party, and thereby excited the wrath of the heiress towards one who ought to have been insignificant. In this true tale this was not the case. The simply dressed, quiet, pale girl in deep mourning, though graceful and lady-like, was unmistakably a nobody ; taken up, no doubt through some charitable or humanitarian whim by the fanciful little heiress. She was therefore passed over, not discourteously—for men are scarcely ever rude to inoffensive women, be they ever so lowly—but with a perfunctory politeness quite perceptible. The golden youths who came to shoot, and try their chance at Audeley Chase, soon found that she did not understand their shibboleth, while her conversation seemed "flat, stale, and unprofitable" to them.

One or two of the older men did not dislike taking her in to dinner, for she listened patiently and politely to their talk, and, when it had any, seemed to perceive their meaning.

Then she played Miss Conroy's accompaniments unoffendingly,

when that young lady chose to tickle their ears, a "sweet obligingness" on her part for which they were not quite as grateful as they might be.

Indeed, one man, Monti Fane, otherwise Lord Montague Fane, an æsthetic, high art, "greenery yallery-Grosvenor Gallery" sort of youth, who played tuneless rambling rhapsodies on the violin, and did not care for hunting or shooting, also found her accompaniments very useful and quite intelligent, so much so that he had an indistinct idea (none of his were very distinct) that he might start her in London as a fashionable accompanist, and reap the fruits thereof. Monti Fane was a very well-known man, and quite an authority, among a certain set of wealthy fashionable dowagers of rank, on matters of taste and art, literature and the drama.

May did not care much for the society which gathered at the Chase during this period, and of the two she liked the women less than the men. There was something hard about them that made her shrink—they followed their own pleasures so boldly—they were so occupied with manly sports and pursuits—that she felt even less at home with them than with their male companions. Yet now and then little gleams of good nature, touches of kindly pity for the poor, shone out, that startled and puzzled her. Was their hard indifference then only a disfiguring mask, which a troop of malignant fairy godmothers compelled these young Princesses to wear? If so, it was the worst infliction that could be devised.

How thankful she felt that Frances had taken up a different line. She was fanciful—and showed in her fads a great want of common sense—but she was kind and womanly. So May stayed contentedly with Mrs. Conroy, read to her, walked with her, or drove with her, while Frances and the other young ladies walked with "the guns," or rode "matches" with those men who could be induced to forego the birds.

The Squire good-humouredly offered to teach her to ride, but May declined; she had not had nerve enough to attempt it, and urged as an excuse that she was too old to begin.

The morning May had received the letters given at the beginning of this chapter some of their visitors, Mrs. Gray and her two daughters, were to leave by a comparatively early train. Frances went with them to the station.

Returning, she asked May to come to the music-room.

"With all this outdoor exercise," she said, "I neglect my music, and I really do not know how we should get through the evenings without a little music. Monti Fane wants me to try that duet of Verdi's with a violin second; I should like to try it over, as they are all out of the way."

"Very well. Why don't you sing those Russian songs we worked so hard at last spring, Frances? They are very charming, and might amuse our rather unmusical audience."

"I am afraid I do not quite remember how to pronounce the words, May."

"I am sure I have not forgotten! I thought of them by day and by night then, I was so anxious to know them thoroughly—they are ground into my brain. You sang them so well at Madame Zavadoskor's."

"Well, I think I did—and what pains Mr. Ogilvie took to teach me. It was a very pleasant time that season in Paris. I was so sorry Mr. Ogilvie could not come here on his way south. He is really very *distingué*, and a very rising man. I wish——"

"What?" asked May, smiling as she paused.

"That he took my opinions and tastes more seriously. He was scarcely civil, May, and really—I am not silly—nor a mere baby!"

"No, certainly not!" returned May, yet not altogether without hesitation. She longed to be able to explain to her friend that she had no natural power of selection, and put the same energy and seriousness into the discussion of a conjuror's tricks as into the gravest question of politics or morality—that she tried to dabble in everything. But these are the kind of truths that no woman (or indeed man either) can tell another, and live!

"I suppose," she went on, "that Mr. Ogilvie has seen and read and done so much, he does not think a girl—like you or me—has any right to an opinion." But while she said it, a pleasant, soothing recollection of his patient receptive mode of listening to what she herself had to say, swept through her mind. Certainly there was a strong sympathy between herself and Ogilvie. Secure in the friendship of such a man, she might well be indifferent to the neglect of others.

"It is extremely narrow and unjust," said Frances, after a short pause, "and I regret his narrowness the more, because he has been so good to you. How hard it is to find anyone who is really consistent."

"I suppose it is, but don't you think a thoroughly consistent person would be rather formidable?"

"No; why should he be formidable?"

"Oh! because—because, I don't know, only I *feel* it."

"My dear May, you are very illogical. Let us begin—would you like to play over the accompaniment first?"

"Yes, I should, and you could read the words."

Then a very interesting practice ensued. Miss Conroy remembered the music well enough, but the meaning of the words, and the pronunciation of some of them, had escaped her.

How vividly the sweet, sad, peculiar airs brought back the first days of her acquaintance with Ogilvie to May's mind and heart, how astonished she was when it first dawned upon her that he rather liked to talk with her, and took the trouble of arguing with her and explaining things to her. Then she was aware of a sudden intense desire to see him and hear his voice again, and it would be quite two months, probably more, before she could expect that delight! He had spoken of October, and what he said she firmly believed. Would he write from Marseilles? Well, she must not be foolishly impatient. He would do what was best and wisest.

"May, I don't think you are attending," said Frances in her serious, measured way, "those notes are all wrong."

"Forgive me! I did forget what I was doing. Let us begin again."

This time both song and accompaniment went well.

"I fancy Monti Fane will be charmed with these," said Miss Conroy. "He will want to play them on the violin."

"A violin accompaniment would be a great improvement," returned May. "Are you going to meet the guns?"

"No, I have no one to go with me."

"I will, if you wish?"

"Thank you, dear, but they will be too far by this time," said Frances. "I will drive with my mother to-day and come back to receive Mrs. Montgomery, she comes just in time for

dinner. You will be amused with her, she is a widow, and very rich ; she was a beauty too, but has a fight not to look *passée*."

"If one has had beauty, it must be very trying to let it go," observed May, as her fingers wandered over the piano. Miss Conroy did not answer at once, she was leaning on the piano, and gazing at vacancy.

"I imagine Mr. Ogilvie would be very hard to please in a wife," she said abruptly.

"Yes ; so hard to please, that I doubt if he will ever find one to suit," returned May, laughing.

"Still, I do not fancy he will remain an old bachelor, and my father says he must marry money."

"It is impossible to say," was the cautious reply.

"Do you think he would be a severe or kind husband ?" asked Miss Conroy.

"Who can tell ? He is a kind, true friend, but does it follow he would be a kind husband ? I do not think he is the sort of man who would be as happy married as unmarried."

"Ah ! there is the luncheon bell, we must not keep mother waiting, while we conjecture respecting what we can never know. Will you have a good practice while we are out, May ? You really play very nicely, but you ought to be more diligent and persevering, dear ; nothing is done without work."

"Quite true, Frances. I will follow your advice."

Mrs. Conroy was looking a little pale and fagged. She was far from strong, and her chest was delicate. A succession of visitors for any considerable time was too much for her, for she was too sympathetic and unselfish a woman not to give herself trouble about them. Nor could she well bear the winter at Audley Chase. The place was rather cold and damp, and this was one reason why the Conroys frequently wintered abroad.

"Frances," she said, when luncheon was half over, "I have had a very kind invitation from Emily, that is Lady Lynthorpe, to spend part of October with them. They have taken that sweet place near Falmouth, which they had the winter before last. I think it would be well to avoid the fall of the leaf here."

"I am sure it would, mother ! and my father would be able to enjoy his hunting all the better if he knew you were comfortable and out of harm's way."

"Yes, and perhaps the Leslies might come and stay with him."

Mr. Leslie is so glad to get a little hunting, and *she* is a great ally of Mr. Conroy's." The conversation continued on the same topic. Mrs. Conroy was a good deal taken up with the project, and proposed taking a house near their friend's if one could be found.

She seemed pleased to have her daughter to act as her charioteer, indeed May had always noticed that the gentle mother seemed to long for a little more of her child's society.

Luncheon over, May sat in one of the windows of the hall, looking at *The Times*, till Mrs. Conroy and Frances appeared ready to go out, and then watched them drive off. After standing uncertain for a few moments, she took her large shady hat, and wandered out into the woods just outside the grounds. Here she sat down on a mossy ridge beside the path which traversed them, and gave herself up to thought.

For the first time since she had been left, as she believed, to Ogilvie's guardianship, a little anxiety respecting her future began to gnaw at her heart. If Mrs. Conroy and Frances were going on a visit in October, she would be cast adrift without a home, and nearly penniless, save for a very few pounds, the remains of Mrs. Conroy's kind gift. She had not enough even to take her back to Paris, nor, if she had, could she quarter herself on dear Madame Falk.

With sudden force came back the sense of her loneliness, her poverty, her helplessness, for she was but ill equipped to win her bread, and, even if she could, she must not live on charity. Between her and all the ills of life there was but one plank, Ogilvie's friendship, and that might not exactly fail her, but could he create work for her, find her a home, raise up a protectress when hundreds, nay thousands, were seeking what she wanted? Thousands infinitely better fitted than herself, with more to give in return for what they asked. Still as she recalled his quiet, resolute face, the calm decision of his movements, the suggestion of reserved force in every word and gesture, a reassuring conviction that whatever he planned, he could carry out *if* he chose, and that he *did* choose she could not doubt. She longed to write to him and tell him that the ground on which she now stood was crumbling under her feet, but was she not worrying herself uselessly? Was Ogilvie a man likely to be false to a promise forgetful, inconstant? No! As she recalled

his look, his voice, she determined to banish these uneasy anticipations, and believe in his loyalty as she knew she could in her own.

Having quieted her heart by a strong effort of her will, May started for a short walk through the wood nearest the house, and having enjoyed the sunset through the trees, returned to have a good long practice before Frances and her mother returned.

It seemed as if Ogilvie was to be the subject of conversation that day.

When Mrs. Conroy settled herself in her favourite chair, a little tired with an unusually long drive, May offered to read aloud a fascinating novel, an offer gladly accepted. Frances, who rather despised novels, went away to give directions to the gardener, and May went on with her lecture, occasionally stopping to make a comment on the characters, till the sound of horses' feet and the crunch of carriage wheels upon the gravel, told that the expected visitor whom Frances had gone to fetch was approaching, while the distant sounds of shots presaged the return of the sportsmen.

May slipped away to her room, glad to be out of the way, and to do a little necessary needlework.

When all were assembled before dinner, she found the newly-arrived guest to be a tall woman, stately and elegant. To May's eyes she seemed by lamp-light still fair and young, with great dark, lustrous, oriental-looking eyes, and a mass of soft, dusky, curly hair. Her beautiful white throat appeared bare down almost to her waist, so long was the open V of her corsage, while a similar opening at the back seemed to stretch from the "miqué" far below her shoulders. She was exquisitely dressed in delicate black lace over mauve, and ornaments of opals and diamonds sparkled here, there, and everywhere. She was standing in one of the windows, though the lamps were now lit, as the dinner hour at this season was eight, and all the men of the party were gathered round her. May took her usual place partially behind Mrs. Conroy, and looked with sincere admiration at the handsome widow, amused with her airs and graces.

When dinner was announced, she fell to the lot of a good-humoured frosty-faced sporting old bachelor, who had a pretty

little place in the neighbourhood, and who generally was assigned to May when he dined at the Chase. They were opposite Mrs. Montgomery, who was on her host's right.

"She's a stunner, ain't she," said May's cavalier, seeing her eyes fixed on their neighbour.

"She is very beautiful," returned May in immense admiration.

"Wait till you see her ride!" continued Major Harding. "There's nothing she can't do. Hunts, shoots, fences, does everything well, and talks—thirteen to the dozen."

"She must be very clever," said May.

"Ay, that she is! She doesn't let the grass grow under her feet," ejaculated the Major, and then addressed himself seriously to his dinner. May, not being so much engrossed in that occupation, gave her attention to the beauty opposite, who was talking to her host in a strong and certainly not musical voice, to May's regret, as she wanted the object of her admiration to be completely charming.

"Yes! We hadn't a bad time at Glendaroch," she was saying when May caught her words. "We made heavy bags every day, and—oh! by the way I met a friend of yours there, that is a man who seemed to know you very well—Mr. Ogilvie! I met him some time ago, when I was travelling in Hungary, where he made himself very useful to me when I was in a difficulty. Rather an interesting man, and a rising one. Old Brackley of the Foreign Office told me it was a great pity that he had not entered the high diplomatic line. I don't know how he came to be mixed up with the commercial side of diplomacy. He is ambitious too. His thorough knowledge of Russian makes him very valuable to the Foreign Office. They say he is to go to Japan."

This announcement sent a chill to one listener's heart. Ogilvie at the other side of the world would leave her friendless indeed! "but he would not leave her in ignorance of such a project, no!—" May thought, "he was far too kind, too considerate for *that*."

She felt a little dazed, however, and only heard indistinctly the rather continuous talk of the brilliant widow, who discussed many things with a tone of decision, as if from her judgment there was no appeal.

After dinner there was more talk, and an animated game of

billiards, but no one seemed inclined for music, so the Russian airs remained unsung.

May was much amused by the performances of Mrs. Montgomery, who seemed to take possession of the place and the command of every one in it.

"Who is the girl in black?" she asked Mrs. Conroy, somewhat audibly. "I don't think I ever saw her before."

"Probably not, she has chiefly lived in Paris, where we made her acquaintance. Frances is very fond of her; she lost her father a few months ago, poor thing."

"Ah! to be sure, she has the air of a picturesque orphan in an old-fashioned romance! She might be made a good deal of, but no doubt she will marry some curate or country lawyer."

"I trust happily in any case," returned Mrs. Conroy, smiling at the summary manner in which the superb widow dismissed the insignificant topic.

May, however, said a quiet good night to Frances, and went away early to her room.

When safely shut in there she wrote a short note to Ogilvie, telling him that Frances and her mother were to leave home in October, and asking his advice as to what she should do. She felt more relieved when this was finished and ready to put in the post-bag next morning.

"He will not have left London without letting me know," was her last waking thought.

Meeting Mrs. Montgomery at breakfast next morning was somewhat disenchanting. The want of youthful freshness and smoothness of complexion, scarcely observable at night, was visible in the morning. She was in what she termed her shooting dress and looked more sporting than charming.

She and her numerous followers started soon after breakfast with much hubbub of talk and noise of dogs, carrying Frances with them.

May was happy enough with Mrs. Conroy all day, for the shooting party had luncheon sent out to them at some distance. Yet she could not quite banish the sort of uneasiness which had disturbed her since she had heard of Mrs. Conroy's autumn plans.

Her faith in Ogilvie was justified. By the second post, which

reached Audeley Chase about seven, came a few lines from Ogilvie, who said :

"You will receive a letter with this or soon after, from a relative of mine, an elderly, unmarried lady, whose sight is failing. She wants some one to read and write for her. She will offer you a miserable salary, for she considers herself poor. I do not! Accept however. I shall tell you more when we meet in October. Greatly pressed, but yours ever,

"P. OGILVIE."

It was dated the night before. So he had been thinking of her and writing to her when she was writing to him. This communication sent her down to dinner with a tinge of colour very becoming to her, and gave her life enough to play Frances' accompaniments with spirit and expression.

Next morning brought her the following, which was addressed

"TO MISS RIDDELL, AT HERBERT CONROY'S, ESQUIRE,
"AUDELEY CHASE.

"MADAM,—

"Being in need of a person who can read aloud intelligibly, and write a fairly good hand, as my sight is indifferent, my kinsman, Mr. Piers Ogilvie, has recommended you to fill the situation as companion, as he tells me you were committed to his care by your late father. As my circumstances are somewhat limited I can offer only a small salary, but you shall have a comfortable home, and liberty to worship according to the doctrine in which you have been brought up. As it is weary work writing to and fro about particulars, I suggest your coming to stay with me for one month to try how we like each other, commencing from the 25th of September. Should we agree, your salary shall begin from that date.

"I am, Madame, yours faithfully,

"EUPHEMIA MACALLAN.

"16 Granby Road, Kensington Gore, W."

(To be continued.)

Bishop Hannington.*

BY EMILIA AYLMER GOWING.

JAMES HANNINGTON, Bishop and Martyr—does not the title read like some old record laboriously unearthed out of the dust of some early mediæval tomb? Yet it belonged to an Englishman of our own time, a personality summing up in himself those special qualities by which our race is destined to “replenish the earth and subdue it” to a degree unparalleled by any other kind among the many families of man. Too little, perhaps, is known to the world in general of this soldier of the Cross, fallen at his post of duty in the war against ignorance and cruelty in the dark places of the earth.

The first Bishop of East Equatorial Africa, sent out by the Church Missionary Society, had risen from a class who have ever furnished the pith and marrow of our nation’s growth—

“ Good yeomen,
Whose limbs were made in England.”

The Hanningtons were a Saxon stock, worth record in Domesday Book, but not of sufficient degree to be marked and catalogued by heraldic art, until the middle of the eighteenth century, when three of them adventured, as youths, to sail in a boat from Dover to Shoreham River, seeking their fortunes. Here one of the young aspirants won a bride of gentle birth, the last of the de Meophams, Saxon nobles dating from 970 A.D. They had once given a Primate to all England, Simon de Meopham, who boasts of a tomb in Canterbury Cathedral.

The Hannington thus honourably married was the great grandfather of the future Bishop, and handed down to him a frame of more than common height, strength and endurance; a resistless impulse to activity and adventure; a passionate love of danger for its own sweet sake. Of such stuff are built the leaders of men.

Dying early, this ancestor left one brilliant and idle, one

* “ James Hannington, first Bishop of East Equatorial Africa,” by E. C. Dawson, M.A.; “ The Story of Uganda and the Victoria Nyanza Mission,” by Sarah G. Stock.

plodding, industrious son. The latter was bound apprentice to a Brighton tradesman, and, in time, developed the firm of "Hannington & Sons," one of the best known institutions of marine London. The eldest "Son," who carried on the business, Mr. Charles Smith Hannington, having amassed a considerable fortune, purchased a country house, St. George's, Hurstpierpoint, within a morning drive of Brighton. Here his eighth child James, was born on the 3rd of September, 1847.

The youngest baby of the prosperous house thrived and rioted in infantile health and freedom. There was a child's illimitable fairyland spread out before him; smooth lawns and buttercup meadows for him to roll and run; shrubberies with deep, dark recesses to play hide and seek; tiny lakes full of delicious mysteries of weed and water life, a miniature type of the wide world through which the young adventurer would one day delight to scour and scramble, with the jovial daring of a boy's heart in the strong man's breast.

He grew to ride, untaught, on the breezy swell of the Sussex Downs; to swim in the sunny waves that lap their feet; he was an athlete and naturalist born and bred. As to his education, that seems to have suffered him, in the main, to do as he liked, pulling him up sharply "with unstinted applications of the birch" on those frequent occasions when the boy happened to choose the wrong road.

At the age of seven a new scene of activity and glory opened to the sturdy little lad. He was taken out in his father's yacht, and managed to steal up the mast and get hung up by his trousers. At the mature age of eleven, he was sent out with Samuel, an elder brother of sixteen, in a small cutter, hired for the two boys by their father. Roughing it with a crew of two sailors, they worked from their starting point of Brighton, round the Isle of Wight, by Portland, Torquay, Dartmouth, Penzance, St. Michael's Mount, on to Land's End and the great rocking-stone at Luggan, landing at every point of interest along their coasting trip. The cruise wound up with an exquisitely thrilling adventure. James was roused in the night by a crash of bottles; he struck a light, marched into the fore-castle, and discovered the men fearfully tipsy, one elderly sinner wrangling with a niece, surreptitiously admitted on board, for the possession of a silver spoon! Next day the old man was convicted and forgiven, and

no doubt the wicked pleasure of the joke had its effect in determining the young urchin to "go to sea." But the parents said "no," having lost one son in the Navy. Scope for mischief was sufficiently available on land, as we next hear of James compassing the capture of a wasp's nest by means of a damp gun-powder squib. In this attempt he accomplished the destruction of his left thumb and, for a wonder, escaped being taken off by tetanus. We also hear of gun and horse accidents, practical jokes without end, strong development in every form of the essential faculties of the abnormally vigorous boy.

Family ambition ordained that the intractable youth should rise in the world. After the wont of English houses, made secure on a basis of money, the sons were to be educated, refined gentlemen, before being set "to the business," from which the wherewithal was derived. They were hampered, however, by somewhat injudicious indulgence, followed by "old-fashioned severity" towards every trivial fault. James complained that his moral courage was undermined by such discipline. Neither was he satisfied with the plan adopted for his bringing up by private tutor and school with frequent visits home. As his journal records:

"I only remained at school until I was fifteen-and-a-half, and then left for business, with as bad an education as possible—I may say as bad as my father's was good. I was no more fit to leave school than to fly, and yet I was then in the first class. So much for private tutors and private schools. I believe that both systems are equally pernicious."

It seems more than likely that this future muscular Christian was born of an unstudious disposition and had fostered the bent by habit. Frankly and regretfully he summed up his own shortcomings: "I was naturally idle and would not learn of myself, and I was unfortunate enough to be sent to places where I was not driven to learn. Would that I had been driven."

Certain it is he never took kindly to classical lore, nor yet to his father's business, although for six years he ground off and on at the counting house mill; an uncongenial life, mitigated by various scampers over Europe, yachting cruises *en prince*, and volunteer soldiering at home.

Here was not a scholar who would ever win much honour on the beaten path of cram and exam. But these were no fair test

of the latent powers in his grand nature. His case could be paralleled, as is well known, in the early struggles of many a gallant soldier, apt to "set a squadron in the field," yet baffled by the fatal crux of the Greek irregular verb, hopeless as regards the occult science of our mother tongue.

Having reached his twentieth year, man's estate began at length to assert itself, deferentially, but with the set purpose of breaking up the mould into which the vigorous individuality could not be shaped by paternal pressure. Recalled from the roving delights of an amateur skipper to the hateful condition of a big-shop manager, he was farther harassed by small public opinion about him adverse to his business capacities. He wrote to his father; "I know I am laughed at and looked upon as fit for nothing but collecting curiosities." His favourite hobby thus confessed, it was sought to turn into useful channels of natural history, and the arduous career of a farmer was proposed as an outlet to the superfluous energies running to seed. But this was met by maternal objection :

"Your letter was kindly and sensibly expressed, but it brought floods of tears to my eyes. The bare thought of my sweet boy going where his father and mother could not see him from time to time distracts me ; father, too, said he could not bear it."

We may laugh at the apron-string that bound the strong young man, yet it does him honour that he could forego his own pleasure in all things to "the dearest of mothers." Such weakness, if such it be, has always marked the noblest sons of men.

But a way was found for him—the highest—into the service of the All-Father. The Hanningtons were a God-fearing house, and even in his youth James had stirrings of spirit, and was led to seek the things that are unseen, real and eternal. Bred as a Nonconformist, he was swayed like a pendulum from leanings towards the Church of Rome to a strong Evangelical bias, until his riper conviction settled into the broad, liberal basis of the Anglican Church. It was his good fortune to see his parents convert their chapel, built for Independent services on their private estate, into "St. George's Chapel" under Episcopal Government. On Sunday, October 26th, 1867, the Dissenting minister preached his farewell sermon, retiring, pensioned by Mr. Hannington : in the following December, a new Rector of the Church of England was inducted into the special cure. The

consequence was, young James became much acquainted with churchmen, and, as he said, "yearned for ordination," led to this, as he apprehended, by loathing for the commercial life. "I had it fixed upon my mind that I was to be ordained, but as for real motives I had none, or next to none. I was, I fear, a mere formalist, and nothing more."

This may have been so, but, already, One stood at the door of his heart and knocked. In this, his 21st year, a cousin died in the house. James set these circumstances down in his diary :

"June 6th. John worse; about 1 p.m. he took his leave of me. About 4, at his own express desire, he received the sacrament from Mr. Methuen, surrounded by us all. I was obliged to go to Brighton at 5. As I was sitting at supper, I had a heavy palpitation of the heart. Something said to me, 'John is dead.' I took out my watch, frightened. The hour was 10 p.m.

"7th, Sunday. Got up at 4.30 a.m., walked down to see John, if not gone, though I was sure he was dead. Went straight to the doctor's room. Heard he died at two minutes past ten o'clock."

This first contact with the cold shadow abhorred of glad young life touched him to the quick. Who could have told him then how few were the years that should rush him on to face that Presence whose terrors the Christian hero could so utterly despise?

He had already entered on a spiritual course of High Church discipline, Lenten fasts, and ceremonial observances, varied with Harvest Home Festival services and popular sports—favoured by our Anglican clergy of the Catholic, anti-Puritan side. One month after he saw his cousin at point of death, "just touching the hem of the Saviour's garment," he too came in trembling uncertainty to the Holy Table. "I am afraid whether I am fit," he wrote, and self-examination led to farther self-distrust. Next day he wrote, "I have to-day been much better in work. It comes easier to me when I watch and pray." Herein we have the key to the practical, simple faith and future possibilities of the man.

A few months later, on the 22nd October, 1868, James Hannington was entered as a Commoner at St. Mary's Hall, Oxford. At our national seat of athletics and rapid life, he

became, at once, a personage. He sprang into favour with his seniors and superiors in knowledge and social weight. A most attractive young fellow, tall, well set-up, with full, life-loving lips, keen grey eyes, full of observation, with a merry twinkle that seemed to mock the world. A peculiar voice that asserted itself amongst the jangle of lighter tongues, though somewhat spasmodic and uneven, like his general movements. Tremendous in laughter, when his sense of fun was once set astir. In his attire, as in all his ways, of strong Bohemian proclivities. A cruel tease, and most terrible practical joker. Of a formidable temper, when angered he could be driven on to any lengths, as was understood by his friends, and discovered by all and sundry who might venture to twit his eccentricities or play upon his good nature.

His rooms were an index to his character and tastes. They were a museum of curiosities picked up from the ends and corners of Europe, oddly mixed with a collection of whips and sticks, a large glass tank of fish, and a variety of comfortable lounges. Here he kept open house and gave wine-parties, noisy, but where any offence against sobriety was accounted a disgrace. On the walls hung gilt and painted Ikons from Moscow, china, pictures, but no woman's likeness, save his mother's, looked down upon the roystering pranks of "mad Jim." His celibate, nay, mildly misogynic principles were a safeguard to his youth. His time of love had not yet come. Thus, not all unfit, he could attend chapel service and Communion on the first day of the week, while diligently sowing his wild oats during the other six. The crop, if luxuriant, was not of malignant growth. Caricatures, in which his teachers and superiors were not spared, theatricals in the Great Hall, burlesquing the Greek tragedies in doggerel English, monkey-tricks of a schoolboy broke loose inflicted ruthlessly on his set all round, seemed to nurse his popularity till he became a leader, social and athletic. At last, he attained his ambition, writing of himself, "I am now Captain of the boats and President of the Club. So I am at the head of everything."

Alas for his degree! After his first year at college, his Principal strongly advised him to go right away into the country for quiet serious reading with the Rev. C. Scriven, Rector of the twin-parishes of Martinhoe and Trentishoe, shut out, in a lonely

corner of North Devon, from the demoralizing influence of any convenient railway station. But alas for human frailty! The terrible Alumnus ran wild among waves and rocks and quaint, original peasant folk; he wrote off his impressions in hot haste:

"The country round is magnificent, and I soon fell in love with both place and people."

And so did these last with him, notwithstanding the slur of "eccentricity" attached to him by candid opinion at the Rectory. He found welcome and splendid amusement everywhere. He enjoyed the strange customs and superstitions lingering on from the older centuries; the "tremendous" funeral feasts; the blood-curdling stories of ghosts, to be seen moving about the graves on Midsummer night; the obstinate faith of the people in witches, charms and spells. Having some amateur skill in the healing art, and a decided taste for its exercise, he made friends with the country doctor, and, as a sort of lay-assistant, rose into high repute with ailing folk as a "medicine man." He even condescended to the cure of an apparently hopeless case with a prescription of coloured and flavoured water, to be swallowed with words of mystic charm! This actually succeeded!

He went up to Oxford in the spring, to pass his "Smalls." On the second day of his examination, an organ-grinder was posted outside, to the distraction of the student's thoughts; he collapsed at once and withdrew his name, but remained in residence, attending to his duties as President of the "Red" and Boat Clubs, and, it would seem, sparing some attention to his studies, for he tried again, and passed, on the 10th June.

He returned to "read" at Martinhoe, whence came new stories

"Of moving accidents by flood and field;
Of hair-breadth 'scapes——"

The future African explorer, while graduating as a cragsman, cave-discoverer and engineer among the Devon rocks and seas, came more than once to hand-grips with death. One morning he was nearly drowned whilst skating; that evening he joined a Devon farmer's party to "see Christmas," with feast, games and dancing, till hot breakfast at 8 a.m. next day. History has not recorded how many of these hours Hannington was a guest. His next adventure is thus told:

"On the 12th January I asked Morrell and George Scriven to join in an excursion to a cave we called 'The Eyes,' two small holes, just large enough to creep through, which penetrated a headland. While there, we discovered below water-mark a hole which seemed to penetrate some distance; so, with no little squeezing and pushing, I wound my way in, and found myself in a large hollow chamber, with no other outlet than the one I had entered by. It would have been a dreadful place in which to be caught by the tide. The water, gradually rising in the utter darkness, would drown one like a rat in a trap. I explained all this melodramatically to my companions outside till they grew quite impatient.

"Well, come out then,' said Morrell, 'for the tide is fast coming up, and we shall have a job to return.'

"So I crawled down to the entrance and essayed to come out head first. I soon stuck fast, and after great squeezing and squirming, barely managed to get back again inside. Next I tried to get out as I came in, and so worked my way down feet first. It was no go—I was again jammed tight. My two friends then got hold of my legs and pulled and pulled till I thought my legs and body would part company. Matters really began to look serious. I was bruised and strained a good deal, and escape seemed impossible. And now the full horror of the situation flashed across us all. My mocking words were actually to be realised! I said in the best voice I could that I must say good-bye, but if ever I passed a dreadful moment, it was that one. The tide was creeping up slowly but surely. Applying all their strength, they pushed me back into the entrance that I might make one more effort head first. Then it suddenly occurred to us all that I might try without my clothes. No sooner said than done; and after a good scraping I soon stood once more by their side. But it was a narrow escape."

Thus he approached the close of his third year at college, and being of full age for ordination, he suggested to his friendly tutor, Mr. Scriven, that he should come to him at once as his curate and read for his degree afterwards! But, as he recorded in riper days: "Very fortunately the Bishop would not consent to ordain me until I had taken my degree."

This he accomplished at last, on June 12th, 1873, after nearly

two more years were consumed in an undergraduate's life, when his aim and purpose of existence had been steadied by the first great sorrow. His mother was taken in February 1872. Eight months afterwards his father announced his second choice of a wife, which proved happy, but the son's feelings were only natural when he wrote: "I am terribly cut up and cast down."

Again he recorded: "About this time a different tone began to steal over me insensibly. I prayed more."

In September, 1873, he was summoned by the Bishop to Exeter for exam., a week earlier than he anticipated. Characteristically, he had postponed the Prayer Book until the last fortnight's cram, thus shortened by a week! He failed to pass. Half furious, half desperate, at his defeat, he was checked by the still small voice within: "If you can give way like this, are you fit to offer yourself as a minister of Christ?"

Fain would he have drawn back. Easily might he have drifted into a common, easy life on comfortable means, with troops of pleasant friends, and playing with the natural sciences to cheat *ennui*. But he was not made of such slight metal. The guiding Hand was upon his shoulder, choosing and marking him out as a strong labourer in the harvest-field of God.

Again he danced the old year out among the Devon merry-makers. Once more he went the rounds of Oxford revels. Then he returned to meet the Bishop's chaplain at Exeter, and faced his examination papers well prepared, at last, but in ill case through excitement and want of sleep. On the fourth day of exam. the Bishop saw him and told him of his fate. His reading had been hard and conscientious, but his matter badly handled. He must remain a deacon for two years—twice the Rubrical time—and come up for an intermediary examination. Of one point the Bishop showed due appreciation, exhorting him: "You've got fine legs, I see; mind that you run about your parish. Good-morning."

In this, at least, the new minister was not likely to be found wanting. Thus conditionally he was ordained, when well on in his twenty-seventh year. Next day, in the quadrangle of St. Mary's Hall, he met his much-tried Principal, who drily said:

"I am not certain whether you are to be congratulated or not."

Next Sunday, Hannington made his first appearance in the

pulpit. The paternal church at Hurst provided the opportunity, and the neighbourly congregation crowded in to listen to his first sermon. In spite of their admiration, he tore it up, and pronounced it "feeble—in fact not quite sound." As yet he was far from the gift of extempore preaching and spontaneous prayer—those secrets by which the human heart is lifted up, as it were, in the pastor's hands and drawn towards its God.

By-and-by he went to his curacy at Martinhoe.

"Ah, me! Was there ever such a curate before or since?" So sighs his biographer. In faith, a curate to set Mrs. Grundy's decorous white hairs straight on end; one little amenable to the yoke of petty parochial pedantry. His dress of unconventional fashion consisted of Bedford-cord knee-breeches of yellow hue, continued with yellow Sussex "spats," brass buttoned—stout, hob-nailed, broad-soled, weighty boots—these combined with an all-round, short jacket of black cloth, underneath which, an ecclesiastical waistcoat buttoning up the side. Thus half the man presented the clerk in Holy Orders, while from the waist down, the Adam of rough, rollicking, out-door life asserted pertinacious sway.

A sturdy, "game" Exmoor pony carried him after his own heart from hamlet to hamlet of the unpopulous, far-scattered cure of souls. Over moor and through dense fog, up hill and down, through mist and rain, he galloped by day or night, Sundays and all. He would arrive for service at some outlying church, when given up for lost, dripping wet; he would put on the surplice over all, and shorten the belated service out of respect to the rustics' appetites for dinner and his own afternoon duty at Martinhoe, to be ridden for sharp to time.

But the field-folk, farmers, and all sorts of autochthonous livers on Devon soil, understood this stranger, and more—they took him to their hearts as one of their own. They knew him and his wild pony as kindly guests. There were pockets in his shooting-jacket to carry Prayer-book and medicines—help for the sick in body and soul. His time, his strength, his money, were freely spent on all who had need of them—but yet, admired and much loved, he sank under the burthen of his charge, into deep distress of mind.

Just at this time, a friend, like himself, recently admitted to Holy Orders, was pleading in prayer for his anxious soul. This

friend sent him Dr. Mackay's "Grace and Truth," a powerful exposition of the faith that was in our Puritan fathers. Dogmatic, hard, uncharitable, it may be, if applied to others, a source of comfort in everlasting hope when turned upon our own breast, as the sword of the Spirit to cleave the heart in twain, and bid us,

—" Throw away the worser part of it,
And live the purer with the other half."

Thus it was that, as a little child, this man received indeed the Kingdom of God. Now he persevered in his self-imposed task, learning to preach and pray without book—but not without great effort and failure. Once, having given out the text, he broke down immediately from sheer nervousness, and was barely able to dismiss the congregation with a hymn. But soon he attained to his desire. A parochial mission stirred him to new proofs of spiritual life. One Sunday, through a violent storm, and snow-drifts that buffeted him back, he rode to a meeting at Parracombe, to speak the words of peace with God through Our Lord and Redeemer—those words so true and real to his bosom now.

Next year his father offered him the home cure of St. George's, now established as a chapel-of-ease to the church, under the Rector of Hurstpierpoint. A curacy in name, in effect an independent charge. He hesitated. His heart was in his work among the simple Devon folk, who crowded the little churches when he preached, as if a new Apostle had come among them. He found it hard to tear himself from the wild rides and free life of nature, so truly sympathetic to the warm pulse within his breast. But the two Bishops of Exeter and Chichester approved of the proposed change. He obeyed, and went to tame his spirit to the common round of parochial system in hard, downright work under an experienced vicar, the Rev. J. Dawson, of the parish of Darley Abbey, a suburb of Derby mainly consisting of factory hands. Here Hannington remained for several months; then went up to Oxford to take his M.A. degree in November 1875. In June the next year he went to receive priest's orders at Chichester, and passed his final exam, coming out at the top of the list. Next day—tell it not in Gath—he wrote: "A day of rest. I nested in the Bishop's garden and round the belfry tower for swift's eggs."

At Hurst, his birth-place, he made his abode for seven happy years, prospering in all things as his soul prospered. He achieved the difficult success of becoming a prophet to his own people. They even closed indulgent eyes to his incorrigible eccentricities, too blind to observe or mark him striding down the village street in his worn-out boating "blazer," or any other outrageous attire conveniently to hand. The pockets of that offending coat were filled with expiatory sweets for the young, who loved their queer pastor with fresh, guileless hearts, and made a way for him to persuade their elders of the living truth. Once, as he walked in correct clerical clothes with a Bishop, a little girl followed, and called his attention by pulling his coat-tails, asking with a blush, "Please Sir, haven't you got a bull's eye for me?"

With young men and boys he had extraordinary influence. He formed a Bible class and temperance association specially for them. They were nicknamed "Hannington's Saints," but they were taught to glory in the mocks of the scoffers. Hannington was the first total abstainer at Hurst, where the movement was unpopular in the extreme. His gift of chaff and banter was not the least effectual way of his dealing with opponents. No one could call another "old fuddler" with such delicate irony, making the most confirmed drunkard's face burn with shame.

Then he made a great personal sacrifice; how great, only born riders like himself can understand. Alas for his gallops over the downs and races across country in pleasant company! He would ride no more, he said; in future, he would walk about the parish. He had sold his horse; he had need of the money. He meant to knock the stable and coach-house into one. He did so, and made a mission hall, papered, carpeted, hung with lamps, furnished with forms and harmonium; perfect in its way.

His hours were full and blessed. And now, the nearest, dearest tie of human life came as the good gift of the Divine. Celibacy had been hitherto part and parcel of his creed, which seems to have been first shaken by the wedding of his friend and future biographer; an event which followed hard upon his own meeting with his fate in the person of Blanche Hankin-Turvin. This lady resided with her mother at Hurstpierpoint, worshipping at St. George's chapel. Hannington admired her

character as an earnest Christian from their first acquaintance, towards the close of 1875. After a year, his bachelor resolutions gave way. December 26th, 1876, he wrote, "Proposed to Blanche Hankin-Turvin, and was accepted."

In his position, marriage was almost an imperative duty. Yet the taste of earthly happiness filled him with strange fears. January 1st, 1877, he wrote: "The new year breaks in upon me. How? How? Under a new epoch I am engaged to be married. I, who have always been supposed, and have supposed myself, to be a confirmed bachelor, cross, crabbed, ill-conditioned. What a change in the appearance of everything does this make! It, however, seems to fill me with the things of this world, and to make me cold and dead."

Had he forgotten the holy counsel: "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord"? Even so; and of such stuff are good husbands made. He had chosen the one woman who suited him in all things; who made his desire her own; who ever helped, and never hindered him in his Master's service. "My dearest heart's beloved," he would commence his letters to her—no mere formal words, but true and tender, straight from soul to soul.

One unspeakable year of perfect wedded union was theirs. Even so long, the young warrior of Israel who had "married a wife" was bidden to stay at home from the battle-field and comfort her. So long, and Hannington, a husband and a father, heard the first trumpet-call that stirred the wandering, missionary instinct, the main motive, the necessity of his spiritual life.

In March, 1878, a telegram reached the committee of the Church Missionary Society. The two leaders of their expedition to Uganda, Lieutenant Smith and his second in command, O'Neill, had fallen—murdered by a savage king at Ukarewe, the Island by the southern shore of the great Nyanza Lake. Those lands were new. Scarce twenty years had passed since they were first trodden by the feet of Englishmen; since the Nile gave up the secret of her source in the Victoria Nyanza Lake. Already had several martyr deaths consecrated to the Christian faith this remote corner of the earth. These two young Englishmen of our day, shedding their blood like the Apostles of eighteen hundred years ago, had come to call back the world to those times of heroic self-devotion—so it seemed

to Hannington, in the midst of his happiness, in the calm peace of the Sussex Downs. Not yet could he break the strong home-ties and wring the heart of a devoted love. But already the Hand was upon him; it was but a question of the time when he should give up all.

Four years more, and he made the great sacrifice. His father was dead; he was free to obey the call. His purpose had ripened now. He told no friend—except the wife, whose will was one with his. Very quietly, the momentous step was taken. In November 1881 he wrote in his diary: “It does not seem to me possible that the Church Missionary Society would accept me. I am not worthy of the honour.”

He offered himself for a limited time—five years—“being married.” Most feeling words. Upon condition that the Society would supply his place at his own chapel, till his return. He would go mainly at his own expense, although his nearest had their claims, and he could not give up all that was theirs.

On the 7th March, 1882, it was settled. He was to go—and as leader of the party. He wrote:

“I returned home, and broke the news to my wife. She was more than brave about it and gave me to the Lord. I had asked her often before, and she said she would let me go. I had not mentioned my offer before, because she was all alone, and I thought the suspense would be more than she could bear.”

Who could add to the human touch of these strong, tender words? For five years, these two whom God had joined, consented to part—for five years of youth and happiness to be cut with pain out of our poor, brief mortal life—then to meet again, if He so permitted, never to leave his loved ones any more, never to say good-bye till death open the doors of eternal hope. The story is best told in his own words:

“May 17th. Up at 5 a.m. though I had everything well prepared. Ah, what a heavy heart I had! I longed now to be away, for the worst was yet to come. The pound of flesh, blood and all, must be cut away. First, my dear mother-in-law, not the mother of my youth, but of my manhood, loved with a man's affection. How brave she was, and she of all, feels that she has least chance of seeing me again. We parted calmly. . . now my most bitter trial—an agony that still cleaves to me—saying good-bye to the little ones. Thank God that all the pain

was on one side. Over and over again I thank Him for that. 'Come back soon, papa,' they cried. My wife the bravest of all."

A soldier's daughter, the true wife of a soldier of the cross.

To what country was the traveller bound, bearing his Lord's last command, to preach the good tidings among all nations? Uganda, the most important negro kingdom of East Africa, was at this time but recently known, yet it had become the chief seat of missionary enterprise, the grave of more than one noble life. In 1843, the German Dr. Krapf was the first to bring a report to Europe of the existence of a great lake in the interior of the Unknown Land. At Mombasa, on the coast, his wife Rosine had died beside him on the hard mission path. Still he persevered, with his countryman Robmann; established the first mission stations, and discovered the mountain Kilima-njaro, with its crown of snow. As years went by, he heard more from native traders of the Great Inland Sea and river, far beyond the knowledge of the white man.

This report ultimately led the way to the expedition of Burton and Speke in 1857. They reached their object, and from them the Victoria Nyanza (sea) received our Sovereign's name. The next to visit its shores was Livingstone. In 1861 Speke and Grant explored its borders, and to them, the Nile gave up its secret source—flowing northward from the lake, and dividing the country of Usoga from Uganda. This last was now visited, for the first time, by white men. Speke resided in the capital, Rubaga, from February to July 1862, as the guest of Mtesa the king.

In 1874 it was reached from the north by an officer of Gordon Pasha, governor of the Soudan. In 1875 another Englishman, H. M. Stanley, visited King Mtesa, and was received with the barbaric pomp and deafening noise of musketry with which the royal savage delighted to honour his strange guest. Mtesa was at this time a Mahommedan by profession, having been persuaded to Islam by the Arab slave-traders, who brought a profitable traffic in human flesh. In dress and manners he affected the culture of the Arab race. Stanley endeavoured to turn his mind towards Christianity, succeeding so far as to bring about his observance of a double Sabbath, the Christian added to the Moslem. He even expressed a desire for Christian teachers to be sent to him. The request was transmitted to England by

Mr. Stanley; large sums of money and a small company of devoted men were immediately forthcoming. Among these was Alexander Mackay, who "held the fort" at the Lake Mission until his death, when still in the prime of his age, in 1890.

Devotion, suffering, conquest, defeat, spell the history of the work to which Hannington was now called. Only five baptised Christians out of the native race could then be shown as results of so much sacrifice. But hope was strong, and in two years after Hannington's first advent, they counted eighty-eight. Since then they have multiplied; the seed sown with pain, watered with many martyrs' blood, and fed with their bodies burned by fire, has struck deep and sprung.

Hannington and his party embarked on board the *Quetta*, at Gravesend, on May 17th, 1882.

"I must leave the farewells. I have not sufficient cold blood in my veins to make red ink enough to write them." Work and activity were the anodynes to pain. "I felt for the moment as one paralysed. Now was the time for re-action. No. 'Casting all your care upon Him.' I went below and set my cabin in order for sea, arranged about prayers, etc., and the rest of the day passed so rapidly that, when night came, I scarcely knew it was gone. My God, how tender Thou art!"

On June 19th they were set down at Zanzibar. Hannington was received at a state audience by the Sultan, who warned him, through an interpreter, of the lions in his path—especially a gigantic snake in Ugogo, reputed to reach to the sky and to devour oxen and women and children whole—which story the traveller hugely enjoyed. Then began tent life in the interior. June 30th Hannington and his company of seven white men started, after many efforts, and much provocation from the fifty native porters, headmen and tent-boys, on whom they had now to depend for every single necessity of life. Hannington wrote his various journeys, encampments and accidents of travel in delightful letters to his nephews and nieces at home. Through scenery that might have graced some English country side, wooded park and watered meadow, they passed along a mountain-chain, with flora like North Devon; then came the terrible, waterless desert, the raging fever, to which Hannington succumbed, and looked only on the Southern shore of the Great Lake, where his companions consulted together and broke the hard truth to him.

He must go back from the very threshold of his enterprise, go home in search of health, or stay only to cast his life uselessly away.

"On October 15th I was desperately ill, and in such agony that I had to ask all to leave me and let me scream, as it seemed slightly to relieve the intense pain. In this state, I said to Gordon (a nephew), 'Can it be long before I die?' His answer was 'No: nor can you desire that it should be so.'"

The illness was most sudden and severe, breaking up the adventurous life so entirely after his own heart. One day we read of his prodigious climbs, quaint adventures with friendly natives and hair-breadth escapes from the murderous shots of ambushed enemies; of encounters with lions, leopards, elephants, rhinoceros, and all manner of great beasts, and more dire, small insect tormentors; of poisoned wells, rank with festering bodies of toad or snake; it was from this last cause his deadly sickness sprung. After long abstinence he drank two glasses from a well, cold, delicious, seemingly clear and pure. From that time he was never well, though he rose time after time, battling with faintness and suffering for several months.

Christmas found most of the party "tottering out of fever beds"; but they kept the holy season, "and thought much of, dear ones at home, praying for us and wishing us true Christmas joy." They were encamped by the southern borders of the Great Lake, on which they should have embarked New Year's day, 1883, for a canoe journey to visit Romwa, king of Uzinza, who had made some overtures of dubious friendship. Now they suffered great difficulties, having been robbed of their provision of cloth—the current coin of Africa, where "nothing for nothing" is the rule applied by the untutored children of Nature. Then the captain of the canoe, styled by Hannington "the old man of the sea," opposed all manner of obstacles to progress. At last Hannington dealt with the question after a fashion of his own, as he thus records:

"The men turned the head of the canoe towards a deep bay, and stated their intention of landing us there and taking us no farther. Should we find canoes there? No. Was it far from Romwa's? Yes; altogether out of the way. Why we shall die if we are left in this way. Well, Mzee says he will not go on! Then I said in a firm, clear voice, 'Give me my gun.' I

deliberately proceeded to load it, and pointing at Mzee at about a yard distant from his chest, I said, 'Now will you go on?'

"'Yes, Bwana, yes, don't fire!' The effect was magical; round flew the head of the canoe, once more we speeded over the waves; but I had found out a secret—I was from that moment the master, and it is not too much to say that our lives were saved by that one prompt action."

Romwa met the white men with fair words and quiet opposition. It was late in June before they succeeded in making any serious advance. They reached Kagei and met much hospitality from the Arab chief, Sayed bin Saif, "the white man's friend." A pleasant surprise it was to hear the French salutation, "*Bon jour, Monsieur. C'est M. Hannington, n'est-ce pas?*" This from a strange white man, who started up before the travellers as they sipped their Arab host's delicious coffee. It was one of the French Jesuits sent on mission to Uganda by Cardinal Lavigerie, the famous prelate of Algiers. Hannington received much hospitality from these priests. "They were very brotherly and kind." They came from Uganda, and had much to tell him of the English Mission party at Rubaga, who were anxiously looking for his arrival.

But he was compelled to turn back, confessing he was "done." Disease and intolerable anguish had bowed the strong man like a broken sword; he had lost four stone of his weight; withered, shrivelled, feeble, he looked nearer seventy than the robust age of thirty-five. To have gone on in such a condition would have been a moral suicide. At last, almost against his own consent, he was carried back to Zanzibar. More than once his negro bearers gave him up, apparently dead, and left him alone on the road. He would come back to life and crawl after the little caravan. The black men said, "Master will die; he is sure to die; but how is it master is always so happy? Black man would lie down by the side of the road and die like a sheep."

Resting at the little Mission stations dotted along the journey through the wild, often at Death's door, he wrote, referring to the 17th March:

"I feel that I must proceed for life or death. Either will be welcome, though I confess to a longing to live. . . . From this time I began slowly to mend."

The turn had come. He reached Zanzibar alive, sailed for

England, and on June 10th, 1883, reached home once more, as one come back from the dead. For a little while he took up the thread of his happy, useful life at Hurst. For one more golden year husband and wife were restored to each other. Who shall measure the depth of that love? Passing mortal passion, beyond time, change, death, the union "In the Lord," far closer, holier than mere earthly marriage, enduring through all things to eternity. But the fire of the Apostolic spirit was in the veins of this man; there was no rest for the sole of his foot until he could tread once more on the battle-field whence he had been driven back.

He preached throughout England and Scotland in the Mission cause. At Southampton he attended an Undenominational conference, such as always commended itself to his large-hearted Christianity. "A curious gathering," he termed it. Here a memorable meeting was thus recorded: "Spurgeon and I had a good time together, and I enjoyed his society immensely."

Still, the desire of his heart was ever pressing on. At last, after many rebuffs, the medical board of the Church Missionary Society passed him for service in Africa. This time he was called to a higher office. A new Bishopric of East Equatorial Africa was instituted by the Society, and their choice fell upon Hannington. He accepted, fully aware of the heavy responsibilities. A member of the Committee, meeting him, said:

"I must congratulate you, Bishop Hannington."

"Commiserate me, you mean?" was the apt reply, midway between jest and sad earnest.

On the 5th November 1884 he sailed in the *Nepaul*, with troops on board for Port Said; these were the days of the belated expedition to Khartoum. The new bishop bore a commission from the Archbishop of Canterbury to visit Jerusalem, and confirm the churches in the Holy Land, on his way out. Here, his own new dignity and importance amused him much; he wrote to his wife: "I find that people stand rather in awe of your poor husband; but I am sure that they need not, for I am an exceedingly meek and unpretentious individual." Everywhere the same story followed him: "he was so kind and genial; everybody loved him. Wherever he went there was a brightness."

On Saturday, January 24th, 1885, the Bishop landed, quite

unexpected, at Frere Town, in the harbour of Mombasa, the head-quarters of the new See on the East African coast; the base of operations for the forthcoming crusade. Here the missionaries' quarters were almost luxurious; a snow-white house, rising out of the dense shade of a grove of mangoes, while the bishop's "palace" with flat roof was set among waving palms, and boasted of a beautiful garden, a tropical paradise sloping down to the sea. It had been planned that the wife should come out to live here, with her new-born baby—leaving three little ones behind—and so make a home of rest for the husband and father as he went to and fro through the dark land, at the peril of his life. But it was not to be. From the bridal year, he began to wish, jokingly, "that you were a more scambleinous tomboy" in the jargon he loved to invent. Seriously, he recorded his regret:

"How little there seems in my diary about my wife. Her incapacity to walk much, or to travel, causes us to go out together so seldom. It is often a cause of regret to me that it should be so. But while I am at play she is at work, and visits much in the parish amongst the poor, and almost exclusively among them."

With regard to missionaries' wives, his views seem to have inclined towards those of St. Paul, "in the present distress." He wrote: "It is little short of homicide to permit them to go beyond the neighbourhood of the coast." Again: "She dies, and we talk about the mysteries of Providence. It would be a greater mystery if in such a case she had lived. In the face of this and the other death, I was quite shocked to hear of ——'s proposed marriage."

Later, the irrepressible joker had his say on the subject. "While I shudder at the thought of young married women coming out, I should gladly welcome a few strapping old maids, who could go about by twos even to Uganda. Send out a dozen to try."

His first demand was for a new church. "Frere Town struck me as one of the most lovely spots I have seen. It is laid out with the care and precision of those advertisements you see hanging up at the railway stations. But one shudders slightly (a kind of half-gratified shudder, as we reap the benefit) to see such palatial residences. Then followed grief, sorrow, amaze-

ment, which increases to find the missionaries dwelling in houses of Cedar, and the Ark scarce resting in curtains——”

“And now, be frightened, and talk about new brooms ; but we have quite decided to appeal for a new church. I won't fulminate by this mail, but we must have a decent church. Not a tin ark, or a cocoa-nut barn, but a proper stone church, a church to the glory of God.”

Entering upon his episcopal supervision, we find him pleased on the whole with schools, services, and native choir, whose voices were far better than those of the southern tribes at Zanzibar, and the singers sang with their hearts. But he complained of a Dissenterish tone. On the other hand, when visiting his brother Bishop, Smythies : “Sunday 6 a.m. the Bishop held a confirmation. Mitre and cope.”

From early Oxford days had ritualistic costuming and posing been a target for his scorn. In this he remained consistent through life, notwithstanding certain leanings, at times, towards Rome. Young neophytes who dressed themselves up in private to be photographed with crosier and censer, and erected mock altars in their bed-rooms with portmanteaux and antimacassars, must have had a rough time with this Herculean practical joker. On the occasion of Hannington's official visit to the Arab governor of Mombasa : “A very nice man,” he records. “Weather less warm ; in spite of Bp.'s clothes, felt cool.”

This betrays how much he preferred “mufti” to those same “Bp.'s clothes,” it is to be feared he often wore with bated respect. When revisiting Martinhoe, he had been seen leaping through pools in episcopal apron, gaiters, and shovel hat. To him, the trappings and suits of sacerdotalism were ever a thorn in the flesh, very hardly to be endured, and, like a school-boy out of bounds, he loved to discard such restraints of civilization for the old brown coat that served him for a thousand miles of walking to and from the Great Lake, or better still, the shirt-sleeves and slippers in which he rushed out to fight, on a sudden alarm of savage war.

Hardly had the new Bishop made himself at home at Frere Town, when a cry of distress from an outlying post of his vast diocese called him, nothing loth, to travel 200 miles into the central wilderness and mountain chain. The object was, first,

to bring succour and hope to the mission station at Taita, set upon the mountain Ndara, the farthest outpost of Christianity on the west. A terrible famine had devastated the country all round ; the little garrison, and its chief, Mr. Wray, were almost perishing from want, and in daily peril from the superstitious native tribes, who blamed the presence of the white men as the cause of the common calamity. Help from Frere Town reached them with great difficulty, and Bishop Hannington promptly made up his mind to head a relief expedition. The second object was, to establish a chain of mission stations as far as possible westwards, towards the Great Lake, and at the same time to reconnoitre the advance towards Uganda by a new northern route, opened up by the English explorer, Mr. Joseph Thompson. This road was shorter than the old, and far less fraught with fever, malaria, and death to the European traveller.

And now, apron, gaiters, and shovel hat were gleefully put aside. Pleasant jottings follow, showing how the kindly chief-pastor made friends with his savage flock :

"At Rubai Mission Station I joined in one of the dances—a kind of puss-in-the-corner drop-handkerchief—to the intense delight of the natives. Henceforth we are friends. Grand cooking preparations. I give a feast to-day, at which I expect about 600 guests. About twelve the feast began in earnest, and at about five o'clock the dances and drums. I joined a little in most of the dances, some of which are very grotesque,"—(we can see the Bishop all there in the thick of the fun)—"and it gave the people more satisfaction than anything else"—(which we can well believe).

Through burning desert to the foot of Taita mountains, then a series of congenial climbs rejoiced the heart of the cragsman and naturalist collector. "As we topped a rise, suddenly before our astonished gaze flashed Kilima-njaro in all his glory ! How lovely the great mountain looked, all radiant with the rays of the rising sun ; the sight was so surpassingly beautiful that it called forth long and loud exclamations from the stolid Africans around us. We at once called a halt, and, as long as time permitted, we feasted our eyes on snow under the burning sun of Africa."

He tried valiantly to get to the snow-line for mosses, but, being unable to spend a night on the mountain, only succeeded

in reaching a height of 9,000 feet. A box of butterflies and mosses was despatched to the British Museum as the spoils of this ascent. After many stirring adventures, and a happy Easter day in the wild, the Bishop records, on his return from this trial trip, in April 1885 :

"I have to praise God for one of the most successful journeys that I ever took. For myself, too, I have enjoyed most excellent health almost the whole way, during the tramp of 1,000 miles. May its result be the planting of the cross of Christ on Kilima-njaro."

What a contrast to his former African travel, dogged by pestilence, fever, and cruel grips of pain ! His mind was quite satisfied now as to the preference of the new route westward. One thing only he did not know. That the north-east approach was regarded by the people of Uganda as the back door into their land. That the advance and pretensions of the Germans, at Zanzibar had drawn down the native suspicions upon Europeans of every sort, who, to them, seemed all one nationality, to be opposed and dreaded by their own. Neither did Hannington take into account the two events that marked the times of his sailing from England, and setting foot in Africa once more. In October 1885, Mtesa died ; that king of Uganda with whom the white man could deal on terms of reason and even friendship. The large-minded savage prince was succeeded by his youngest son, Mwanga, a wretched boy, schooled in cruelty and vice, held in check by a knot of Arab slave-traders and old court officials, whose power and riches depended on oppression of the subject races, and the keeping out of European influence. Furthermore, in January, 1885, by the assassination of Gordon, all the native races of Africa were taught the lesson, that it is as safe as it is easy to accomplish the betrayal and murder of Englishmen.

On Trinity Sunday, 31st May, the Bishop held an ordination at Frere Town. William Jones and another rescued slave were admitted to Deacons' orders—the first native ministers of the infant East African Church. One of these, William Jones, was the Bishop's chosen companion on his last fatal journey to Uganda. He would suffer no fellow European to share the dangers on his way.

After many difficulties, a caravan of native porters was got

together, and the start was made from the Mission Station at Rabai on July 23rd, 1885. Before the great wilderness closed around him, dates his last letter to his wife. "Kikumbulia, August 11th, 1885, My dearest," he opens the story of hardships and troubles already overcome—he concludes, "And now, just leave me in the hands of the Lord, and let our watchword be, 'we will trust, and not be afraid.' Many kisses. Your most affectionate husband, James."

Never more in this world! Never again, till they meet in the land that is very far off, where God shall wipe all tears from their eyes!

The next news reached England by telegram from Zanzibar on New Year's day, 1886.

"Bishop Hannington, who left Mombasa in June last, in order to find, if possible, a new road to the Victoria, which will obviate the long detour by Unyanyembe, has been seized by order of the King within two days' march of Uganda. The latest report is that the king has given secret orders to have the Bishop executed."

It was all too true. Two records have confirmed the tale. William Jones's pencilled diary, "Behind my Bishop through Masailand," and Hannington's own pocket diary, kept till the 29th October, his death day. This was recovered by the chief of the Uganda Mission, Alexander Mackay. As these records show, the journey was fairly prosperous. Terrible straits for want of food, owing to the suspicions of the tribes, were overcome with consummate tact and patience by the Bishop and his henchman, William Jones. Big game, elephants and rhinoceros, afforded more pleasure even than peril to the dauntless sportsman, who so often looked to his gun to feed his wild following. The great terror of the road before him lay in the country of the Masai, where the renowned troop of braves, call El Moro, consisting of the youth of the tribe, devoted themselves from the age of seventeen to twenty-five to bloodshed, and military license of every kind; treading down the land like so many mad young kings. They lived in kraals apart from their people, with their unmarried girl companions, on a lower level of decency than the four-footed beasts. Yet the Bishop saw

something noble in the race, and longed to win them for Christ. He had some stiff encounters with them, on the ground of "hongo," or travellers' tribute, paying heavily, and narrowly escaping slaughter. Hannington had been warned of this peril before the start, "but, as you know, that was not likely to prevent your husband——" so he wrote to his wife on a like occasion before.

He reached "fair Kavirondo" on the north-east of the Great Lake. He found the natives good-natured and polite to strangers, and by no means importunate. Here he chose to leave the caravan, under the charge of William Jones, and proceed to Uganda by the Lake, alone—attended by fifty native porters, picked men, and lightly loaded with absolute necessities, so that they might carry him, should his walking powers fail. This seemed not unlikely, as he started while suffering from an abscess in the leg. He penetrated to Usoga, the borderland divided from Uganda by the Nile, flowing northwards from its source in the Lake. During the next week he walked 170 miles, though still lame. October 19th he fell in with a dangerous drunken mob from Uganda, sent to subdue Usoga. Their excitement was intense at sight of the Bishop. He managed to overawe them, and pushed through with his terrified men. Two days more brought them to Lubwa's, the chief of that country, who proved insolent, beat his war-drums, and surrounded the party with a large military force. A soldier was set to guard the Bishop in his tent, and follow him if he moved an inch. Undeterred, he climbed a neighbouring hill, and had the joy of discovering a splendid view of the Nile, at half-an-hour's distance, over a beautiful country. Thither he asked leave to go, which was denied. He was never to set foot in Uganda.

He called his followers, who had doubted the Nile's existence, to come to the point whence he had seen the great river. One Masadi bin Suleiman, a renegade Mahomedan and open enemy of Christians, enticed the Bishop away from his men, on pretence of showing him another view. Then about twenty of Lubwa's ruffians set upon him, violently threw him to the ground, rifled his valuables, and dragged him along by the legs, till, with a desperate struggle, he recovered his feet. Then they forced him on, knocking him violently against the banana trees, some

trying to pull him one way, some another, with agonizing stress and strain.

"In spite of all, and feeling I was being dragged along to be murdered at a distance, I sang 'Safe in the arms of Jesus,' and then laughed at the very agony of my situation."

Torn and mangled, he was cast into a horrible stifling hut, where he fell exhausted on his bed, and burst into tears—the strong man quite gave way. He was kept in prison while messengers were sent to Mwanga, at Uganda, to decide his fate. Lubwa and a large detachment of his thousand wives came to feast their eyes, with cruel curiosity, on the caged lion. "I felt inclined to spring at his throat, but sat still." Hannington asked to sleep in his own tent, which was granted, but availed him little, for the vermin found it out and swarmed, the drunken guard murdered sleep, a hyena howled around, smelling a sick man; he had not an hour's rest. Fever and delirium overtook him. He prayed the Lord for release.

It came on the eighth day of prison. King Mwanga's orders had been received: to slay the Englishman. On the 29th October he was led out from his bed of fever to an open space before the village, where he was met by his own men, and a renewal of hope—soon to be undeceived. The poor fellows were bound two and two before his eyes as men doomed. Then with a fierce shout and shower of spears, the savage warriors covered the ground about his feet with a heap of dead and dying men. Then truly he tasted the bitterness of death, who, for himself, never saw the face of fear.

He turned upon the narrowing circle of his foes, hesitating yet, with poised weapons, to violate the majesty of that tall form and calm eye, strong in the power of God.

"Tell the king that I die for the Buganda—that I have purchased the road to Uganda with my life."

Still they seemed at a loss how they should murder him, till he pointed to his own gun. One of them took it, and shot him dead.

The grand life was not wasted, thus cast away in the vigour of its prime. Not in vain. Surely he has opened the door into that land where he looked his last on the waning light of that October sun; yet not before his eyes had seen the great Nile at its birth-spring. That source has received

for all time the name of good augury, the title of our Queen. Its waters have baptized a modern race of Christians, oftentimes found faithful unto death. In a thousand years to come—who shall say?—it may be that our Island Empire shall have passed away in division and strife—which, may God forbid!—here, our language will remain; here, the faith of our fathers, effete to one sense of smaller modern criticism, shall blossom again as the rose in the waste places of the earth. As we dwell on the Acts of the Apostles, so shall our later race keep record of this new Gospel story. How James Hannington died for Uganda; how King Mwanga's young boy-pages, when called to bear witness of their faith, gave themselves to be tortured and burnt to death for "Isa Masiya" as their musical tongue pronounces the Name of Names.

The tide of western life is surely setting towards that vast continent, no longer "dark," but lightening in the dawn. Mr. Chamberlain, amid ringing cheers, spoke from his place in the House what English feeling and reason will avouch and sustain:

"I believe the people of this country, apart from all question of party, are determined to have their share in the disposition of the newly-discovered lands in Africa, and in the work of civilization to be carried out there. Sacrifices both of life and money might be justified by results, and the people of England, knowing that omelettes could not be made without the breaking of eggs, are prepared to count and to bear the cost. As to Uganda, our honour is pledged, and it is too late to go back."

In December, 1892, the bones of Bishop Hannington were discovered by his successor, Bishop Tucker, and his party, in Usoga; they were disinterred for re-burial in hallowed ground, and will remain as a martyr's claim upon the land to be brought into the light of God.

My Star.

I WORSHIP a Star in the heavens,
A remote and beautiful prize,
Beyond range of man's power of reaching,
Serene in the limitless skies.

I prayed, and I longed, and I wearied,
With passion, and fury, and tears,
That my Star might come down to my pleading,
Or that I might ascend to the spheres.

But alas ! She was cold and unbending,
And my prayer was uttered in vain ;
My Star in the limitless heavens,
That I never, never, shall gain !

No longer the earth and its pleasures
Allure me. My heart is afar ;
Where high in despairing remoteness,
I worship my pitiless Star !

ETHEL M. DE FONBLANQUE.

Daffodil.

GO, Daffodil, I cried amain,
And tell my love I wait,
And as the spring comes back again
My longing waxes great.
Then the dear daffodils that stood a-row
Laughed, as they wavered in the noon-day glow

I plucked a yellow daffodil
That nodded at my feet,
And whispered, Say I love her till
Thyme ceases to be sweet,
And till the tender western wind's caress
Rivals the sea's exceeding bitterness.

I sent the flower to London-town,
With words of passion writ ;
She pinned it straightway in her gown,
And gaily smiled on it :
And, if it died there, on the breast of her,
Do I not envy sore my messenger ?

FAYR MADOC.

The Autobiography of a Tramp.

"THEN who brought you up—if you never knew your parents?"—was the question asked of an individual seated one cold winter's day on a three-legged stool, in a very small apartment.

"Brought myself up," was the answer, and the statement proved to be literally true when the speaker proceeded to give the details of the process, in a graphic sketch of his past life. The man appeared to be about forty years of age; nature had supplied him originally with a strongly-built muscular frame, but hardships and semi-starvation had reduced him somewhat to the condition of a gaunt skeleton, with large bones standing out prominently under the tightly-drawn skin; he had a bullet shaped head with closely cropped hair, a rugged face by no means devoid of intelligence, small, piercing black eyes, and a wide mouth of which the lines gave clear evidence of an innate sense of humour. The distorted contour of his nose, and certain scars and bruises on his features generally, indicated that he had been engaged in various pugilistic encounters in the course of his career, but despite these adornments his good-humoured countenance was by no means unpleasant to look upon.

The room, entirely constructed of stone, in which he sat was simply a prison cell, and he was then wearing the usual dress prescribed for the recipients of Her Majesty's hospitality in those grim palaces where it is so rigidly enforced; but when he first arrived in that cheerless abode, he had been clad in a very peculiar costume. It had been formed of the coarsest canvas—a hole cut in one end allowed his head to emerge from its folds, and at the other, a string drew it loosely together round his ankles, so as to allow his bare feet to step gingerly on their way, while his arms and hands were completely imprisoned. The cause of this accoutrement was as follows: Torrents of rain on a December evening had driven him to seek a night's lodging in the workhouse. This had been afforded him in the tramps' ward, where he was invited to recline on a sloping board strewn with straw, which had already provided a couch for many hardly

bestead wanderers like himself. Sleep was not easily wooed under these circumstances, and he had employed the long hours of darkness in tearing up the rags which served him as clothing into the smallest possible fragments to which his chilled fingers were able to reduce them. When his nocturnal occupation was discovered he made no secret whatever of the purpose he had in view. He knew that, out of regard to the public morals, the State must provide him with garments of some sort, and he was satisfied that any form of attire must be preferable to the dilapidated tatters which had constituted his sole protection from the cold. The State recognized the duty and performed it by presenting him with a sack, which had previously been employed in carrying potatoes from the field to the workhouse. In this guise he had been taken before the magistrates, and finally marched to prison for fourteen days as a disorderly pauper. There he was visited by a person whose enquiry into his early education had drawn from him the answer already recorded. On that and subsequent occasions, he was led to detail his whole history to his visitor, having made the amazing discovery that there was actually someone in the world who seemed to take an interest in him. Inasmuch as it proved to be a very typical account of tramp life it seems well to transcribe it, for the benefit of those who may desire to penetrate into the lower depths of human existence in this country. The story shall be given in his own words, with only such qualifications as may render it intelligible and fit for ears polite.

"I have always gone in the name of Dick Arch," he began. "Was I ever cursened (christened), did you say? I have been cursed up hill and down dale pretty nigh every day of my life, but that had nothing to do with what they called me. Dick were a fancy name, I take it, but Arch was tacked on to it because I was born under a railway arch. Yes! you may stare, but that's where I were found one summer morning, an hour-old babby, with my mother, quite a young girl they said she were, laid there dying with me on her breast. The policeman what found us took us to the workus, but the mother were dead afore we got there—and they said I'd have died too if it hadn't happened to be a warm night, with the sun shining hot quite early—rather a pity now warn't it that I kept on living? I'd never have felt nothing if I had been buried in the pauper grave

next day with the girl that bore me, and I've gone through a fine lot of trouble and misery since then I can tell 'ee. First there was that darned old woman that had charge of us workus babbies. She were a Turk, she were! the way she knocked us poor kids about were a caution. I'd give my ears to have a go at her now that I've got a pair of good fists—if you'll believe me I'd do a month in this here stone jug for it if I could get just five minutes' chance to punch that old woman's head! I were but three years old when I saw the last of the workus, but I can never forget her. How did I come to leave so early, you ask? Well you see I was an uncommon sharp 'un for a three-year-old, and I did as neat a trick then as I ever did in my life. The old Turk used to put us babbies to play on a bit of grass in front of the gate while she went to breakfus, and one day I saw an old man coming out that was taking his discharge; the porter gave him a push through the gate, saying, 'There, be off with you and don't let us see you here again,' and I thinks to myself what a fine thing it 'ud be to get away with that free chap and never see the old woman again, so I ran after him, and when we got behind a hedge on the road where they could not see us from the house I caught hold of his coat tail and asked him to take me with him. 'Whatever does the little shaver mean?' says he as he stops, and looks down at me, and I says again, 'Take me wid you, I wants to go wid you.' He stood a minute thoughtful-like, squinting at me, then, he told me long after, he says to himself, 'I dunno but what it 'ud be a good thing to have a little kid like that for my motherless child, that 'ud whimper in the cold and draw the coppers out of the ladies' pockets,' so he took me by the hand and away we went, and I've been on the road ever since up till now."

"Do you mean that you have never had a settled home all your life?"

"A home? Law, no! I never so much as slept within four walls except now and again when I took a night in the workus, if the snow storms were like to bury me alive, or in a common lodging-house, if I had a copper or two, and whiles I've done a bit of time in a stone jug like this, that has driven me nigh mad, for I cannot abide being shut in a house, whether it's a prison or no— Well, the old dad and I tramped the country for a good many years after that, and I must have been

fourteen or fifteen when the end came for him, but I dunno for certain how old I was, or am, for I have lost count of my age. How did dad and I get our living all that time? Well, we hawked oranges when they were in season, and herrings and bloaters other times, and boot-laces always; we never sold a single boot-lace in our lives, but they brought us a lot of coppers—for we'd offer them to ladies as didn't want no porpoise hide leathers, nor bloaters neither, and we'd say we couldn't sell nothing and was starving, and they'd out with a sixpence or maybe a shilling if we was in luck's way. Then I brought dad somm'ut most days in the winter, for I used a fine dodge of standing silent in front of folk with tears running down my cheeks and looking awful hungry, as indeed I were most often. We went on like that till dad got terrible old and infirm; he had the rheumatics and hobbled along a regular old cripple. People tried to make him go in the workus, but he said he'd a deal rather die. Then there came a raw winter night when we had had bad luck all day and were half starved, we were resting on the banks of a canal, for we meant to go on to a bridge, and sleep under the shelter of it all night to keep out of the drizzling rain, but dad said he could not go another step, and set himself down with me close beside him wet and shivering. We kept looking at the black water just below our feet, till it grew dark as pitch, with no stars in the sky and no one near us. After a bit, dad said to me:

“‘Dick, you do as I tell 'ee, and in about half-an-hour from now you cut and run from this here place, so as no one should ax you any questions, tramp on to the next town, and for all you're hungry to-night you'll get a bit to eat somehow, only go from here as I tell 'ee.’

“‘Yes, dad,' says I, ‘but sure you're coming too?’

“‘That's neither here nor there,' says he, ‘and look, Dick, I've got nothing left in the blessed world but this, and I give it to you,’ and he took his old black pipe out of his pocket and gave it to me; he had not a bit of baccy left that night, I think if he had it might have made all the difference, for a smoke 'ud often cheer him when everything else was gone—he put the pipe in my hand and then he says, ‘Good-bye, Dick, I have had enough of this, so here goes,’ and with that he flung himself right into the deep water below us. I gave a shout and tried to catch hold

of him as he plunged in, but I could not; there was a great splash and the water churned for a minute, but he seemed to go down like a stone. I went to the very brink and bent over and looked in as well as I could, and called loud to him to reach a hand to me and I'd pull him out, but there was not a sound and I could see nothing, so after I had waited till I was sure he was dead, I turned and ran away as he telled me, so that was the end of poor old dad, and I've kept his bit of a black pipe all these years——"

There was a tone in Dick's voice as he said these words which showed that he was by no means devoid of human feeling. However, he speedily rallied his spirits and spoke again quite gaily.

"I got on first-rate for a time after that. I used to show dad's pipe and cry, and say it belonged to my dear father, who had got drowned and left me a poor orphan, and I did not know how to get a living without my father——"

"But that was not true, Dick, it was a lie—he was not your father."

"Well, in course not," said the tramp, raising his eyebrows in surprise, "but we all tells lies. We couldn't get on without it—not any of us—no doubt you tells them yourself on occasions."

"I hope not indeed—but did no one ever teach you that it was wrong to tell lies?"

"Wrong? I dunno what you mean—how was I to get my living if I did not make up stories? The other fellows on the road said I was an uncommon good hand at it," and Dick smiled with modest pride.

"Then you never had any teaching, Dick, I suppose you cannot read?"

"No, indeed, I never touched a book in my life."

"How was it that the School Board never got hold of you?"

"I dunno what sort of a board you mean—them as the plank beds is made of here are hard enough and that's all I know—but I never had any schooling if that's what you're asking?"

"Did you never go to church?"

"I was in a church just once, in all my life, and that was for a burying," said Dick very sadly. "I'll tell you about it presently—but I had five or six years on the road afore I came to that——"

"And did you never try to get work all that time?"

"Never did a day's work in my life and never wants to. The most as ever I did was to dig potatoes out of a field on a moon-light night, just for my own eating, when there was no one to notice me, and that was quite labour enough for me!"

"I think it would have been much better for you, Dick, if you had taken regular work and lived in a settled home."

"What!" he exclaimed, "be stewed up in a house o' nights and break my back over the spade all day, with some worriting old farmer hounding me on! Not if I knows it! The free road and the open air's the life for me, with no man good or bad to be the master over me. I likes to trudge miles and miles and sleep under a hayrick or a hedge o' nights."

"But do you not often suffer much from cold and hunger?"

"In course I does—but it's better nor stone walls and six hours' work before you can have a bit of food, and now I've got to tell 'ee that I had a good time once, the beautifullest, happiest time ever a poor chap could know! I wish it could come over again, every minute of it—but that'll never be—she's deep down in a pauper's grave, poor wench! You don't know who I'm speaking of—I'll tell 'ee. This was how I saw her first. One day in the springtime when it was getting warm and bright, I had had bad luck; I could sing a good song then, and I got my living mostly that way, standing under folk's windows or amusing the chaps in the public houses for an hour or so, but that day it were sunny and every one was out, I hadn't made a halfpenny and I hadn't had a bit to eat; I were loafing along not knowing what to do when I saw a showman's van drawn up at the roadside. There was to be a great fair in a town near by next day, and I guessed it were going to it. I went and sat down near it, thinking I might pick up a morsel from some of the folk inside, then I saw a young girl sitting on the shaft munching away at a piece of bread and she were just the prettiest bit of a thing you ever saw in your life, with fair hair all of a tangle over her head, and big blue eyes. She had on a fine sort of red frock, with spangles on it, but no shoes or stockings on her little bare feet. I sat staring my eyes out, looking at her and she kept glancing sideways at me; presently she says in a little voice like a bird's; 'Be you hungry?' 'And that I be,' says I, then she took and broke off more nor half her hunch of bread and flung it to me. I caught

it and said: 'Thank 'ee,' and then I axed her if she would not come and sit down by me and eat her share along of me. She looked round timid like as if there were some'un she was afeard on, and then she said, 'I dunno why I shouldn't, they are all gone to the town, and nobody can ketch me now,' so she springs to her feet and comes to sit down beside me, and soon she tells me all about herself.

"She had been a van girl all her life, for she were born in one—her mother worked for a travelling showman, the same as had the van now, and it were her business to stand outside at the fairs and beat a tambourine and persuade the folk to come and see the giant as were the show—it were nobbut the man himself made up on stilts, with long trousers over them, and when this woman died he set Jenny, that were my wench's name, to do the same work, as soon as she were old enough, after her mother was dead.

"Jenny had not a friend in the world but the showman and the woman he called his wife, and they were not friends but brutes to her, they beat her black and blue most days, and grudged her every bit she ate; they would call her mother a bad name, and say Jenny had no business to be born, and she hated them, and told me she'd have run away long ago if she had known any place to go to, but she had never slept out of the van in her life, and she had never learned to work or do anything but dance at the fairs and beat the tambourine. 'Oh, I wish I were out of it,' she said, and threw up her arms despairing like, 'for they are sure to come back drunk to-night and give me the stick.' Then I gripped hold of her hand and said, 'Come along of me and we'll go right away where they'll never ketch sight of you again.'

"She looks at me with her big eyes opening wide, and she says, 'Do you really mean it?' 'I mean it as sure as I'm alive,' says I, 'I likes the looks on you—I never cared much for any wench afore, but I'm sure I could care for you, it's lonesome for me always on the road by myself, and you'll be a deal better with me than getting the stick from the made-up giant in the van, so we had much better come together and go our ways free and happy, with no one to trouble us.'

"She kept looking hard at me; 'Will you be good to me?' she says at last, after I had told her my name and how I had

lived all my days, and I answers, 'That I will; if I don't do a good part by you, my pretty wench, let the earth open and swallow me up.' You see I had taken such a fancy to her, I felt almost off my head, and with that a smile breaks out all over her face and she puts her little hand in mine and says, 'I'll go with you,' and we got up and went then and there. Hand in hand we went down the road and over the fields—away—away, till we got a good long distance off into a thick wood where there was no fear that the giant could ever find us. I dunno if he ever so much as looked for us, but we never saw no more of him, and Jenny and me was just as happy together as the day were long.

"You talk of a settled home, we made that wood our settled home all through that blessed summer, for it were beautiful weather, fine and hot mostly every day; we slept on the moss under the trees, with the stars Jenny loved to look at up above us, and the flowers she would dress herself up in all around us, and then by day we'd go out and get our living. I would sing my songs till a good many coppers was thrown at me and Jenny would dance and play the pretty antics the giant taught her, and she had such winning ways with her, no one could help giving her all she wanted—money and sometimes clothes, and food very often. I used to tell her she could always get a sixpence when she smiled up in people's faces and asked them to help her in her pretty bird voice. Ah! that was a good time!" and Dick passed his hand over his eyes, "I never had any such afore and I never will again."

"Were you married to Jenny, then?"

"Married?" He looked up, surprised. "Do you mean did we go before the parson or the registry office to say we was man and wife? We never thought of such a thing—there's money wanted for a job of that kind and we needed all we got for our living, and what would have been the use on it? Jenny 'ud have stuck to me and I to her, if there had never been a parson in the world. Well, that happy time went quickly, worse luck; we had the beautifullest autumn after the fine summer, but then there was a terrible change, the winter came on all of a sudden and it was the very worst for frost and snow and biting cold as ever I knew. We could not stay in the wood any more, there was icicles dropping from every tree and the frozen grass was awful to lie

on with our poor bits of clothes. We went right away on the road again and sometimes crept into an out-house o' nights or slept in a common lodging if we were in luck's way with the coppers. I wouldn't have done that for myself for I can't abide they closed up rooms where thirty or forty of us were all crammed in together, I'd sooner have slept in the snow ; but Jenny was not strong, she were like to be a mother and she did not stand the cold well, not having been used to it in the van. I must get on and tell 'ee the end.

"One day about the New Year time there came a terrible keen frost just after there had been a heavy fall o' snow so that the ground was thick with it, town and country alike, it had got all hard and frozen so that it could not be swept away even off the streets. Jenny and me came into a place where there was a lodging-house, after we had tramped a long way to get there, but we had spent the last penny we had on a bit of breakfus in the morning, and we had not met any one to give us more or buy the two or three oranges I had to sell, so we ate them for our dinner, and when we got to the common lodging we had not the means to pay even for leave to sit by the kitchen fire all night, as we had done many a time ; they would not let us come inside the door at all. Jenny begged hard to get in and said we'd pay another time, she was shivering so with cold, but they never will let you in unless you pays down first, so they told us to be off ; then Jenny caught sight of a fine blazing fire inside and she cried : ' Oh, I must have a warm,' and tried to push past the man of the house, but he drove her back and turned her out in such a rough way that she fell down all her length on the ground, he shut the door on us so I could not hit him as I wanted to, and when I lifted Jenny up she could hardly stand for a minute or two, and seemed quite faint-like. She got better after a bit, and then we walked on and took the country road that led to the nearest town, where there was a workus that would let us into the tramps' ward.

"It was miles off, an awful long way, but there was no help for it, we had to do that or stop out on the snow all night, and as it turned out that was to be our portion in the end. It soon got dark, we had left all the houses far behind, and at last we came to a great desolate moor where the frozen snow lay so thick you could not tell where the road was, but we still tried to hold on in a

straight line. Jenny had been going slower and slower, clinging to my arm, and she had not spoken a word for ever so long, nor had I, for I was very down-hearted, and suddenly she loosed her hold of me and dropped right down in a heap on the snow saying: 'It's no use, Dick, I can't go another step.' 'But you must, Jenny,' says I, 'we can't stop here to be perished with the cold, and there's not a sight or sound of any living creature near to help us. We must get on to the workus; come along. I'll put my arm round 'ee and that'll help 'ee on.'" I pulled her up off the snow, but she seemed to have no use in her feet and she just sank down again and moaned as if in pain. I knew I could not carry her many steps, so it were no good to try. I had just to do the best I could. I sat down in the snow and took her in my arms she laid her head on my knees and there she seemed to rest like. After a while she began to talk in a rambling kind of way: 'Dick,' says she, 'this'll be the end on it. I don't think as I shall ever go no further.' 'Don't you talk foolish like that, Jenny,' says I, 'you'll be all right and bright when you've rested a bit, and we'll get on somewhere that you can have a warm and a scrap of food, though I has to steal to get it for 'ee.' 'No,' she says, 'I think I be a dying.' Then after a while she said: 'Dick, there were a parson used to come to our van when we were at the big fair, and he teachd me a deal about One as he said lived up above the stars, One that pitied us and had gone through pain and death for us, he said we should all see Him after we died. I have a feeling somehow to-night as if that One was pitying me, "like as a father pitieth his own children," the parson said. Ah, and he teachd me to say a bit of a prayer, "Father ch'art in Heaven.'" I did not know what to answer Jenny when she went murmuring on that way, for I knew nothing about it all, no parson had ever teachd me anything. She were silent then a long time and I did not speak, for I seemed to grow stupid like sitting there in the cold—at last I could hear her say, 'Oh, I be so tired—so tired—' she said the words very feeble so that I could just make them out, and I thought shewere drowsy and had fallen asleep, so I kept quiet, and she never spoke nor stirred no more at all. I sat on there hour after hour and it got awful still and lonesome, it was the dreadfulest night I ever went through with that great white moor all round me and the black sky up above, for thick clouds had come over the

stars Jenny spoke of. I felt as if I were the only one living in all the world and as if I should just sit there with Jenny cold and heavy on my knees for ever and ever. I thought of old dad lying under the dark canal water, and I seemed just as much shut out from living people as he were. I thought the hours would never pass and the darkness never end, but at last—at last there was a glimmer of daylight and then I looked at Jenny. She were lying with her eyes fixed open, staring up at the sky, but her face was as white as the snow round us, and she were dead—stone dead—I knew then that I had been sure of it all along only I couldn't bear to think it. I didn't know what on earth to do. I lifted her off my knees and laid her down on the snow, and then I walked about a bit to get the feeling into my feet, for I were stiff and cramped.

"I wanted to get away where there was people I could talk to, and a fire—and not just only my poor dead wench and the snow ; but I didn't like to leave Jenny lying there with no one to bury her. After a time, I were that thankful to see a trap coming along very slow and noiseless through the drifts, and a stout man sitting in it driving the pony. I ran to him and stopped him, and showed him Jenny stretched out close to him, and I told him how she had died in the night, and I begged him to take her on to the town in his trap and I'd walk by the side ; but he shouted at me in a rage, and asked me if I were mad to think that he would carry a tramp's corpse in his carriage with him. I were that beat that I burst out crying ; then he said he'd do this for me, he'd drive on to the town and tell the police what had happened and they'd be sure to come ; and so they did after another dreary few hours. They brought a cart and laid Jenny, stiff and cold, in it, and made me come with them, for they said they must lock me up till they held a 'quest and knew how she came by her death. I did not seem to mind so as I could feel there was living men round me again, and I did not want to think of my poor wench no more nor I could help. They said at the 'quest she died of cold and exposure after the fall she had got, and then the workus buried her. Four of the paupers carried her poor bit of a coffin and I walked behind, no one but me ; it was snowing fast all the way ; they took her in a church, and that was the only time in my life I ever were in one, as I telled 'ee. A parson read out of a book and then they took her up

again and carried her to a long hole they had dug outside. The parson said some more words over her and went his ways, and I waited till they filled in the earth quite up to the top, and then the snow come down thick and you couldn't tell where the grave were at all."

Dick paused and drew a long breath when he reached this point in his history.

"Poor fellow! you must have felt very lonely after that sad day."

"Ah! I just did. I couldn't bear it. I went on the road again, but I felt I must have some 'un to talk to, so I joined on to a young fellow as was tramping it too. I didn't fancy him at all, and he were a bad 'un and no mistake, but I kept by him for a year; then he got lagged for stealing a sheep out of a field and was took off to prison. I tried going on alone again for a long time after that, but I had got used to company and I grew so low-spirited that I couldn't sing a lively song to please the folk in the public-houses, and at the long last I took up with a woman a lot older than myself that had been on the road going on for fifty years. It suited us both well to keep together, for she had only one leg and she needed some one to help her to stump about with the wooden one, and then she made a fine lot of money and shared it with me. She used to knit night-caps and sell them whenever we came on a few cottages, for it's wonderful how fond they be of night-caps in the country villages. I used to call her granny at first, but she wouldn't stand it; for all she was old and as ugly as sin, she wanted folk to think her a fine young woman."

"But surely at her age she will not continue to lead a wandering life much longer?"

"That she will! She'll never give it up; she'll go on with it till she drops, and so will I. I've known women and men too, that was past eighty, still hobbling on as best they could, and she is sound enough yet on her one leg. She went away by herself when I were brought here, but I'll find her again safe enough on the road when I gets out of this hateful place."

Here Dick Arch's story came to an end, having been brought up to date; a few days more would see him released and set outside the walls of the prison again. There was that in the man, lawless as he was, which seemed to show that he was not

incapable of a better and happier career than that he had hitherto known, full as it had been of privation and suffering, and strenuous efforts were made to induce him to abandon his very undesirable mode of life. He was told that work would be found for him and a respectable lodging provided till he could pay for one himself, but he was absolutely impervious to all such offers; he would not hear either of a settled home or regular work; he would have his liberty and his free, open-air existence, and he would serve no master but his own wild will. It proved impossible to move him—there was but one concession he would make, he graciously consented to eat a good breakfast within the four walls of a private house on the morning of his discharge from prison. When the repast was over, he rose with the utmost cheerfulness to set out once more on his unending journey, without the faintest idea where he was to lay his head that night or any night in all the future. A last appeal to give it up was made to him, but with no hope of success; he merely shook his head, and said he was kindly obliged for his breakfast.

"But I'm off on the road," he added, "and I'll keep to the road as long as I can tramp it anyhow. You talks of illness and old age, but I don't trouble about that; if the worst comes to the worst I can always make a hole in the water like the old dad."

And with that he went his way and was seen no more.

The story of Dick Arch may be taken with slight variations as describing the existence led by thousands of tramps in all parts of Her Majesty's dominions. It has no analogy with the tent life of the gipsy race, whose nomadic propensities are their very birthright, for these tramps are men and women whose natural calling would be simply to get an honest living by daily labour.

Whether any part of our national system is responsible for the continued existence of vast numbers of persons in this wholly unprofitable manner, is a problem which we cannot attempt to solve, but it is one well worthy the consideration of all whom it may concern.

F. M. F. SKENE.

A Legend of the Great Mogul.

THE Emperor Akbar strove to govern his vast realms on the fundamental principles of universal justice and toleration. He thus became the great consolidator of the mighty Mogul monarchy, which, under his beneficent sway, first crystallised into concrete form. The cohesion of the various particles was rendered exceptionally difficult by diversities of race and creed, which tended to retain the Empire in a fluid and disorganised condition. The wide and liberal sympathies of Akbar recognised the fact that through the conflicting religions of his subjects the Divine Voice had spoken to countless millions who lived and died in their hereditary faith, and he shrank from destroying any channel through which, though worn, imperfect and choked with weeds, the water of life might still flow to thirsting souls. Perhaps the possessors of Christian truth sometimes lack the charitable tolerance of the Moslem monarch, and include every imperfect system in one sweeping condemnation, forgetting that each historic faith has borne witness in some degree to a Divine plan and over-ruling purpose, and that the leaven of truth, even in corrupt and time-worn creeds, is the secret of that vitality which still enables them to strike their roots so deeply in the human heart. This avowal in no way detracts from the honour of Him who gathered into one perfect sheaf the scattered blades of corn sown broadcast by the Father's hand over waste and desolate places, so that all His wandering children might glean some harvest-gold of heavenly truth.

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The purple beauty of an Indian evening stole softly over the parched and weary earth, and the majestic Fort of Agra, standing out like a frowning range of porphyry cliffs against the fires of sunset, absorbed rather than reflected the carmine glow, until the huge red battlements and towering Elephant Gate burned with a lurid incandescence which transfigured the massive pile into unearthly splendour. The nine marble palaces contained within the Fort appeared lovely as a dream of Arabian Nights, with the

interlacing vistas of polished columns flushed by the roses of dying day, and revealing the rainbow-tinted spray of flashing fountains beneath fragile canopies of alabaster fretted into filmy lace. On the right the aerial domes of the Pearl Mosque, that flawless gem of Mogul art, soared in spiritual beauty to the deep blue sky, and from an arched portal opposite a gaily-clad crowd streamed forth between two ranks of turbaned soldiers, who guarded the way until the last of the noisy throng had departed. Then the massive outer gates closed with a mighty clang of their heavy bolts and bars, the soldiers again formed a double line, and the Emperor Akbar, accompanied by his Ministers of State, came forth from the Divan and crossed the fountain-filled quadrangle. The noble face beneath the jewelled turban was sad and weary, for the great Mogul was worn out with the prayers and petitions, the wild appeals for justice, the importunities of greed, and the vindictive longings of hatred which had risen up all day long like a cloud to the throne from whence he gave judgment. More perplexing than aught beside was the fierce strife of sect and creed, Santon, Fakir, and Guru waging savage war one against the other, with that intensity of rancour only seen when fanaticism sharpens the sword, and religious zeal becomes a consuming fire.

The mild and benevolent monarch sought not to be the avenger of Allah, but left his people free to worship as they would, with an underlying hope, scarcely justified by the tenets of Islam, that the different paths of faith, however widely severed on earth, would meet at the gate of Heaven, if only the feet of prayerful reverence smoothed each rugged and devious way.

Dismissing his attendants, the Emperor paced slowly down the arched and pillared corridors of his beautiful Zenana to an alcove of perforated marble, overlooking the blue waters of the sacred Jumna. With a deep sigh he threw back the gilded lattices to admit the cool evening air, while the tranquil beauty of the scene stole into his heart, bringing rest and refreshment after the heat and burden of the day. The murmuring river, as it washed the palace wall far below, the splash of fountains and the ripple of the water through the marble conduits of balcony and corridor, soothed the weary monarch and created an atmosphere of delicious coolness and repose. The distant sound of women's voices came from the inner chambers of the Imperial

Zenana, and the monotonous hum of the distant city just reached the ear. Palm-trees rustled their green fronds, and a shiver trembled through the peepul-trees which brushed the marble balustrade with their topmost boughs, hitherto motionless as the mimic leaves and flowers sculptured on the fretted alcove in a design intricate as the web of an Indian shawl. The domes and minarets of Agra soared above a golden shaft of sunset light which swept across the city, veiling wall and battlement in a haze of glory. Painted kiosks rose from thickets of orange trees, and the gorgeous flowering shrubs of pleasure-gardens alternated with black lines of towering cypresses, standing like sentinels round some stately tomb on the sandy banks of the holy river.

As the magical Indian night subdued the riotous colour of the scene, and the glassy water mirrored the rising moon, a fair girl, robed in a cloud of misty veils and richly embroidered shawls, entered the alcove and prostrated herself at Akbar's feet. A smile of welcome greeted the favourite wife, as the Emperor raised her from her lowly posture to a cushioned divan below the seat he occupied. The ivory pallor of the face which looked up tenderly into his own, belonged to no type of glowing Hindoo beauty, though framed in ebon masses of wavy hair. The deep brown eyes were soft and wistful, and the sadness of the sensitive mouth suggested some undying regret or sorrowful memory. The mournful expression of the beautiful face was intensified as the young queen touched her lute, and chanted a Portuguese hymn in a pathetic voice, for Mariam was a Christian captive brought from a conquered city of Western India and chosen by reason of her beauty for the doubtful honour of a place in the Imperial Zenana. She soon won the heart of her royal master, whose noble mind recognized the sympathetic nature of the Portuguese, and he strove, by loading her with benefits, to dissipate the cloud of sadness which brooded over the Christian girl, torn from home and kindred, and realising with untold pain the hopelessness of her anomalous position.

In time, the Emperor's devotion earned Mariam's grateful affection, while he commanded her respect by showing his frequent superiority to the bonds of hereditary custom and creed by which he was held but not enslaved.

When the sweet voice died away, the lines of care had vanished

from Akbar's countenance, and turning to the singer after a momentary silence he said gently :

"Tell me, O Mariam, somewhat of the Master whom thou dost worship, and of whom thou wert taught in thy childhood, for the Prophet of Islam counteth Him a true Apostle, even 'A Word and Spirit sent from Allah,' as saith the sacred Koran. Well do I know it, beloved, by what thou art, for the sweet disciple's life singeth ever her Master's praise, even as the tone of yonder lute betrayeth the maker's hand."

Tears rushed to Mariam's eyes, for amid the discordant surroundings of the Moslem Court, she cherished the memory of her innocent childhood, keeping ever before her mind the lost ideal of the sinless Christ. Then as she met the glance of pain and perplexity which Akbar turned upon her troubled face, she stifled the rising sobs, and in faltering accents told the story of the Mount of Blessing and the gracious words spoken to the weary and heavy laden, dwelling especially on the tender promise, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." The Emperor listened attentively, saying after a thoughtful silence :

"Wise indeed is thy Prophet's lesson, and somewhat of this large charity lingereth still in manifold and diverse creeds. Would to Allah that life and doctrine were linked together in closer accordance! The yellow Lamas who twirl their prayer-wheels beneath Himâla's snowy heights teach that 'the unmerciful shall fail of Buddha's rest,' and even spare the gnat that stings them, so strictly do they keep the letter of their law, and yet they vex my soul with the wranglings of jealousy and malice which turn their priestly hives into a hell. Brahmin and Buddhist contend with each other in bitter rivalry, and even the fierce priest of thine own creed (be his heart softened by Allah's love!) saith with meek face and folded hands, 'Blesséd are the merciful,' and yet his own black robes are singed and scorched with the funeral pyres he lights for Goa's Jews."

Mariam sighed, for the problem seemed too hard to solve, but as she looked at the kingly countenance of Akbar, so full of noble thought and high resolve, she answered softly :

"Perchance, the Spirit who walked with man among the trees of Eden, maketh only the loving heart His garden, since there alone the good seed springeth up into a fragrant flower."

"Even so, my beloved," replied the Emperor, caressing the jewelled hand which toyed with the strings of the lute. "Thou hast wrung thy sweet thought from the inmost heart of faith. Behold yon crescent moon, the sacred symbol of Islam! Doth it not witness to the light by which it lives?" Then raising his hand the Emperor pointed to the Pearl Mosque, steeped in silver radiance, and from thence to the sculptured brim of the nearest fountain, where the moonlight glittered on a sheet of broken glass fallen from the cupola of the Hall of Mirrors belonging to the zenana. "Look, Mariam," he continued, "who shall doubt but that some ray of light from the Heavenly Sun shineth through every world of nature and of grace, or that some glimpse of Allah's saving truth may reach even the least and lowest of His creatures, who, through alien creed and rite, draw hints of the Law Divine? So may we not despise even broken gleams of light which shine from shattered mirrors."

With these words Akbar laid his hand for a moment on Mariam's bowed head, as with a mute prostration she lowered her veil, and gliding away from the alcove, vanished in the shadowy twilight of the marble colonnade.

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The following day a rumour was whispered through the Zenana that a beautiful Abyssinian, whose dark loveliness equalled that of the Egyptian queen for whom a world was lost, had planned her escape from the palace at nightfall, with the aid of a former lover. As the veiled figure descended the marble steps which led from the Queen's bathing kiosk to the river, the suspicion of the negro guard was aroused by the lateness of the hour, and by the sight of a boat waiting in the dark shadows of the palace wall. An alarm was given, the plot discovered, and both the faithless wife and her lover awaited death at the will of the Emperor, after the invariable rule in which conjugal infidelity was punished by Oriental despotism. While the terrified women bewailed with tremulous tones and tearful faces the dark fate looming over their lost companion, the culprit herself was kneeling at the feet of her stern judge in the beautiful Hall of Audience devoted to the trying of causes which only concerned the Emperor and the Harem. The orange and scarlet draperies which enhanced the dusky beauty of the Abyssinian wife were flung carelessly back

from the brown arms laden with golden bangles, and raised in earnest supplication, but no sign of grief or fear dimmed the starry lustre of the passionate black eyes, or shook the statuesque dignity of the stately figure. Only once as the amber glow of sunset filtered through the delicate tracery of the perforated marble screens which admitted light and air into the hall, the full red lips quivered for a moment at the thought of the last sunset she would ever see, whose sun was going down while it was yet day, but the low rich voice never lost its even sweetness.

"My lord and king," she said in appealing tones, "if it be meet, and for thine honour's sake, that I, the humblest of thy slaves, should die, I will not tax thy mercy to forgive—— Death to me were easier and sweeter far than life without its most precious gift, even him whose wrong of thee was born of his unchanging love for thine unworthy handmaid. Side by side we played in our happy childhood among the pillared aisles of deserted temples on the banks of the Nile. Torn from my lover's arms by the tyrants who ravage Abyssinian homes to fill Eastern slave-markets, he sought me over land and sea. The slightest clue, the faintest hope sufficed for love to follow. The moons of many seasons waxed and waned, and yet he found me not. Yesternight, heartsick with the fruitless quest, weary and disconsolate, he cast himself down beside the palace walls, and suddenly, as though the music fell from heaven, he heard the accents of his native tongue, as the song of the shepherds who tend their flocks beneath Abyssinian palms floated down from the latticed balcony. He knew my voice, for the ears of love are quick, and he answered me in song. This night he waited to fly with me to the far-off land toward which thy servant's heart hath ever turned! The fault was mine, O King, for he knew thee not, and only sought his own. Though dwelling in the shadow of the throne, reverencing the wisdom and majesty of Akbar and receiving the royal bounty with grateful tears for mercies undeserved, thy slave hath never swerved from the one true love of her life! He looked into mine eyes, and with his kiss all was forgotten. Even the cruel fate befallen us since last we met seemed but a dream, as the present blotted out the weary past! Spare him, O King! but slay me in his stead! Death were welcome rather than gold and gems and favours

which do but shackle the soul with chains when bought at the cost of a loveless life! Behold, thy slave, who spurneth her fetters, and would gladly die for him who is her only life!" With these words the impassioned appeal ended, and unclasping the bands of beaten gold from her dusky arms, the Abyssinian cast the glittering circlets at Akbar's feet, while a tempest of sobs and tears which the thought of her own fate failed to wring from her dauntless heart, shook the passionate nature to its depths as she realized the extremity of the peril in which her lover lay. A black frown contracted the haughty brows of Akbar, and the rigidity of his iron mouth appeared immovable as a mask of metal. The strongest prejudices of Oriental despotism were stung to the quick, and the inherited instincts of a mighty race and an absolute power demanded the death of the guilty pair as a righteous retribution. Turning to the negro guards of the Zenana who waved the gleaming fans of peacock's feathers over the royal head, the Emperor pronounced the sentence of death in unrelenting tones:

"Take these accursed slaves," he said, "and let the waters of the Jumna hide their guilt and the dishonour done to the Imperial Throne of India! On my head be the judgment of Allah, since he who executeth the King's decree is but as the sword in the royal hand."

At this moment a soft footfall echoed on the tessellated pavement, and Mariam, the Christian Begum, passed swiftly up the hall to the steps of the Judgment Seat. The light of an intense resolve fired her wistful eyes and flushed her gentle face as her sweet voice rang out in unfaltering tones:

"I crave thy grace, oh, King!" she exclaimed as she stooped to kiss the hand of Akbar, and with a graceful gesture threw back the snowy veil from the rippling tresses which fell over her ivory shoulders. Then, rising to her feet with her drooping figure drawn to its full height, and her own griefs forgotten in the strength of her womanly sympathy, she stood like an avenging angel between the despot and his victim, braving the penalty of the law, which forbade question or comment on any Imperial decree.

"Alas!" she cried, wringing her hands. "Hath my lord the King so soon forgotten the words of the merciful Christ, of whom we spake but yesternight, and the saying of Islam's

prophet, 'Endure and pardon, so shalt thou win eternal life' ? Oh, Akbar, noblest of mankind, show thy revenge by mercy to the erring. Pity and pardon the love which hath woven a cord too strong for death to break ! so shall the conqueror of the earth be dear to the God of whom the Saviour of the world and the prophet of Islam testify !"

The powerful frame of the Emperor shook with the mighty storm of passion which surged within his heart. The Abyssinian queen had regained her self-control on hearing the merciless sentence of her inexorable judge, and a look of settled despair hardened the outline of the beautiful African face. Only the sound of falling fountains broke the solemn silence, so fraught with terrible possibilities. Then, as Mariam fell on her knees, and her uplifted face pleaded for mercy with a silent intensity of supplication beyond the power of language to express, the flashing eyes of the outraged monarch softened as he met the imploring gaze of her whom he loved so well. Rising from the throne, he bowed his head towards the Mihrab of the Pearl Mosque which pointed to Mecca, and smiting upon his breast said, in reverent tones, tremulous with deep emotion :

"Allah alone is great, and may His Holy Name be honoured even to His servant's shame. Well spake thy holy Prophet, Mariam, even as the prophet of Islam. Since these who wait their doom lie powerless in the strong grasp of the Fate which holdeth all mankind, no fetters forged by mortal hand shall bind their souls. They sinned through love, the King through love doth pardon." Then, turning to the astonished guards, he added, "Take them beyond the Mogul realms, but let them live, so may the servant of Allah meet with mercy at the Hand Divine !"

As the Emperor left the Hall of Audience and passed through the marble arcade, the words of a Vedic hymn were borne upward on the breeze from a pavilion beneath the peepul-trees of the outer court, tenanted by a Fakir whose saintly life commanded the respect of the tolerant Moslem conqueror. The aged recluse had won repute as a prophet and seer, who through closed eyelids beheld the distant future, reading the thoughts of men as though the human heart were an open book. Akbar paused for a moment and listened to the guttural chanting of

the sacred song, which seemed like a heavenly confirmation of the royal sentence :

“ He who doth mercy show and foes forgive
Victorious reigneth over all who live ;
Far beyond arrow-flight of hate or fear,
Dwelling in holy calm, to Godhead dear.”

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Two leagues across the burning plains which surround the city of Agra, the vast woods and solemn cypress avenues of Sekundra overshadow the stately tomb where the Emperor Akbar sleeps amid a paradise of verdure and flowers. The bulbul sings amid the feathery bamboos, and ring-doves coo from thickets of banyan and aisles of palm round the last resting-place of the noble monarch who rose above the relentless creed of Islam to unexampled heights of mercy and toleration.

Perpetual twilight now surrounds the turbaned tomb beneath the ruddy domes and minarets of the Imperial burial hall, but a slender column of alabaster may yet be seen, above which the famous diamond, known as the Koh-i-noor or “Mountain of Light,” was formerly suspended. From an opening in the domed and vaulted roof immediately overhead, the blazing light of the meridian sun flashed upon the glittering prism in streams of glory, which irradiated the gloom of the sepulchral chamber with magical brilliancy. The presence of the incomparable jewel in this hallowed spot typified, in the poetic imagery of Oriental thought, the purity of the Imperial conscience illuminated by the light of Heaven and reflecting the celestial radiance on the surrounding darkness.

Only the priceless diamond was considered an adequate symbol of the noble life and lofty character which distinguished Akbar, the Great Mogul. Though the Koh-i-noor has long since passed into the hands of the alien race who wrested the sceptre of India from the Moslem power, native pilgrims still flock to the tomb of the wise and merciful monarch, whose memory is enshrined in hearts slow to receive but strong to retain the impressions so deeply engraved on the national mind and thought. Representatives of every prevailing Indian creed may be found among the worshippers, who kneel in the silence of the shadowy dome to breathe a prayer for the soul of Akbar,

and to offer their wreaths of snowy jasmine and purple Bougainvillea, the sacred "grave-flowers" of Northern India, at the royal tomb.

Close at hand rises the marble dome which marks the last resting-place of Mariam, the Christian Queen. Nearest to Akbar's heart in life, she now sleeps beside him in death. Pathetic traditions, full of tender significance, still linger round the memory of the Portuguese Begum, who, like the pearl in the depths of the ocean, or the ruby in the darkness of the mine, retained the spiritual beauty of a pure and gentle heart, amid the uncongenial environment of a luxurious Oriental court.

The hot wind which sweeps across the scorching Indian plains may yet bear upon its wings the balmy fragrance of some distant rose-field which blooms beyond the limitless horizon, and across the smoke of battle and the clash of arms which mark the onward march of conquering Islam the divine music of love and pity steals on the ear, from the story interwoven, like a thread of gold, with the dark records of despotic power.

EMILY A. RICHINGS.

The Lady Maud's Walk.

A LEGEND.

THE Lady Maud paced up and down her favourite walk. The green sward lay cool between the lofty yew hedge sheltering it on the one side and the low breast-high battlements on the other that overlooked the softly flowing Isis.

Her gaze wandered across the river to the broad level plain that had been an ancient battle-field.

There was war and tumult in the land, and two nights before she had seen, in her sleep, the dead heroes of the plain arise and hew each other down, shouting their heathenish war-cry, so she knew that some decisive battle had been fought. Had it brought victory to the Barons and relief to the burdened people, or had the faithless Edward triumphed over the noble brothers of Lancaster, some fatal natural ally fighting for him, as when Hereford's army had been dispersed by the Severn? During the long weeks of her husband's absence, straggling soldiers, wounded or sick, had been sheltered and nursed in her Manor of Kempford, and rewarded her hospitality with praises of Henry of Lancaster's gallant deeds and news of his welfare. She knew that a last great effort was now being made in the North to break the yoke the Despencers had laid on English necks, and could not grudge her husband's arm to the good cause, though she felt widowed and sad without him.

The happy years she had basked in his glowing love lay behind her like a dream.

As she mused she heard a slight sound, the bushes were stirred and a man came forward.

She knew the intruder, Sir Humfry Ruddall, her husband's friend and brother-in-arms.

He looked worn and ready to faint, for he had ridden hard day and night, wounded as he was, to bring her news on his way home. And now she learnt what her fears had presaged. The good, chivalrous Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, had been taken at Boroughbridge and condemned unheard to a shameful death.

The gallant young Henry, her husband, now an outlaw, was waiting at the risk of his life to see the end of his loved brother and had sent her word if he came not by the fourth night to seek refuge for herself and her young son with the good women of Daylesford, whose spiritual mother was his own Aunt Cicely. For now his lands and castles had all devolved upon the minions of the king, and she must wander homeless, leaving the fair manor where her fathers had dwelt.

Sir Humfry, having delivered his message, would fain have hidden again till night, when he could depart unseen on his homeward journey, but his strength gave way, for he was weak from loss of blood and undressed wounds. Maud was too compassionate to send him away to die untended, and, since to call assistance would be to betray a good friend, she herself washed and dressed his wounds and begged him to tarry till rest and refreshment had made him fit to travel. The chamber beneath the guard-room at the end of the Walk did for a hiding-place. It was unused now, for the men-at-arms had followed their lord, leaving a very thin garrison, rather to keep off marauders than defend the place from a regular attack, and at this point the river was deemed defence enough, since no particular danger threatened.

So in the fresh of early dawn before the household stirred or late at night or when the heat kept others languidly within, the Lady Maud, her soft eyes radiant with holy charity, came like a ministering angel to the poor, sick knight. If any of the servants knew of her mission, it wakened in them no surprise, for they were accustomed to acts of mercy on her part, and thought it well befitted her kind heart to rescue a fugitive from the power of his enemies.

The Manor of Kempsford had, however, been granted to Roger Boyfield, and he, a former unsuccessful suitor to the sweet Lady Maud, whose wealth and beauty had sent her many lovers, rejoiced, like a mean caitiff as he was, in his power to work her annoyance.

Henry of Lancaster's tryst was still unfulfilled when the new lord took forcible possession of his halls. Maud had just time to send her boy by trusty hands to Daylesford, begging the good mother Cicely to come and take counsel with her.

For Sir Humfry was exhausted with fever and scarcely able

yet to cross the lawn, supporting himself by the wall, leaning heavily on his sword, and Maud dared not cast away a fellow-creature's life by leaving him in Boyfield's power. At last they concerted a plan.

The lay-brothers at the Mill, mindful of benefits received from the Lords of Kempsford, consented to fetch away the wounded knight secretly by night, dropping down the river in the flat boat that carried their grain.

The night was dark and stormy, as the Lady Maud stole away, sad at heart, from her girlhood's home to meet the Lady Cicely and Sir Humfry.

The sick knight leant against the parapet waiting anxiously for the coming of the lovely friend who had rescued him from death, and whom he revered as a saint of goodness and charity, in all loyalty and honour. A pale flash, precursor of the coming tempest, lighted up the lawn and showed the Lady Maud's hooded figure sweeping across the lawn. "I fear greatly gentle lady," said Ruddall, when he knew the plan that had been made for his safety, "that my sojourn here has brought you into danger. Humfry de Ruddall would ever rue the day that he endangered one hair of that saintly head."

"Nay, Sir Humfry, I were worse than a Saracen if I sheltered not my husband's friend; would that he too might find help at need. But fly at once ere it be too late. Farewell!"

Sir Humfry of Ruddall on bended knee reverently pressed his lips to the kind hand, extended in farewell. Just then a vivid lightning-flash lighted up the scene. The knight's countenance was lifted with loving worship to her who had brought him life and hope in his despair, the lady's gaze was wistful and sad, her starry eyes dimmed with tears for her heart was heavy with fears for her husband's safety. An exclamation of wrath roused them both.

Henry of Lancaster had sought his wife at the appointed place, but found only his child in the Good Women's charge. He heard from them how his former rival had taken possession of her manor and full of rage and horrid dread, hurried to find her. Entering the guard-room by a secret way known only to himself, he emerged upon Maud's Walk as the flash revealed his wife's lovely figure bending towards the kneeling knight.

Noble, generous, and high-minded, Lancaster was yet a slave,

like all the Plantagenets, to sudden ungovernable fits of rage that swept away all his reason and every tender feeling. Transformed by jealousy into an un pitying demon, his features convulsed with passion, his nerves quivering with the herculean strength of madness, he sprang at one bound across the narrow sward, and almost before Maud was aware of his presence, had seized her in a cruel, iron grasp.

"Ha! traitress! false, shameless woman!" he hissed between his clenched teeth, and leaping on to the battlement without a moment's pause, he hurled the wife he loved forth through the darkness of night into the midst of the gentle Isis.

Her wail of agony mingled with the waters' splash and the terrified shrieks of the Lady Cicely, a trembling witness of her nephew's crime.

Then, with a wild, bitter laugh, Henry turned towards her suspected lover. But Maud's danger had lent Sir Humfry a moment's strength; forgetting everything but her dire peril, he was stumbling and falling down the descent to the river's brink.

Lancaster's mad, changed voice rang out derisively above him: "Aye, join her in Hell, foul miscreant!" and then was drowned in the thunder's roar, as the tempest broke at length from the angry heavens. Flash after flash, peal upon peal, rain pouring down in one undivided sheet, pitchy darkness, then a second's lurid light, the storm raged not with greater fury than the demon of wrath, hatred, and despair that tore the guilty soul of Lancaster.

The shrieks or, perhaps, some spy, had roused the new lord of Kempsford and his house. In the darkness of the storm they searched, at first in vain, for any cause of alarm, till a flash revealed Lancaster's well-known lordly stature. Then Boyfield and his retainers rushed upon their prize, and called on him to yield. But the combat with great odds was mere joy to him.

"What!" he cried madly, "yield to *thee*, caitiff? Shall I send my wife to perdition, and spare thee? Nay, go all, a merry company!"

And he cut his way through his adversaries and was lost in the darkness of night.

Yes! the darkness of night had settled down on Henry of Lancaster. He fled, not knowing whither, with the blind instinct of self-preservation, until he had put the sea between himself

and his foes. But wherever he went, Remorse stalked by his side—a grim, importunate companion.

In moments of quiet he saw his wife, as he had known her from girlhood—loving, gentle, and true, her beauty only valued for his sake, because he delighted in her loveliness, bearing herself with the dignity that became her rank, innocent and devout, his fits of passion only driving her to more earnest prayer on his behalf.

She had been the sweetness and crown of his life, could such a woman be guilty?

Then despair and self-reproach seized on him, and tortured him with all the whips and stings of unavailing remorse.

Yet again, if not guilty, what was the meaning of that scene? As he saw her again with ghastly distinctness, the treason of wife and friend revealed as it seemed by Heaven itself, cruel hatred surged up stronger than death. He justified himself then and rejoiced in his iniquity, and choked down every softer feeling till his heart became as hard as the nether millstone.

Gradually his thoughts of wrath and vengeance fastened on the king who had murdered his brother, and brought disaster on his own career. Had he not been forced to oppose his misgovernment by force of arms, he would never have had to leave his wife unprotected and exposed to insult or temptation, nor have lost the wise brother by whose counsels he had ever been guided. Rather than Edward should enjoy the quietness which could never more be his, he would ally himself with the She-Wolf of France and help her to overpower his tyrant cousin.

So it was a day of grim joy to him when the poor, weak king was put into his charge at Kenilworth, and the people muttered that the day had come to take vengeance for the patriot Saint, Thomas of Lancaster, by whose blood miracles had even been wrought.

The five heavy years since the terrible night at Kempsford had left their mark on Earl Henry of Lancaster. The frank gaiety and genial bearing which made his House popular had given place to a stern, settled gloom, only dispelled by the excitement of battle.

He would have been a bold man who dared bring the Earl's sin to his remembrance, as he stood, superb of stature, his grand Plantagenet features hard and stern, the master of life and

death in his majestic hall, unrelayed by triumph, like a man past feeling.

Such a man, however, was Sir Humfry de Ruddall. He had fought on the king's side, and now faced the victor, calmly waiting his sentence.

At the sight of him, Lancaster grew pale as death, and reeled with strong emotion. By a strong effort he controlled himself, but his eyes glowed like hot coals as he glared at his false friend without speaking, while the bystanders wondered and feared, and no sound was uttered. Sir Humfry returned his gaze calmly and fearlessly, with such a strange expression of reproachful pity that Lancaster became troubled in spite of himself, and his eyes sank.

"Lead this man aside, and see to it he be kept safe," he said at length to his soldiers, and went on with other matters. When he had ended all that required his attention, he ordered Sir Humfry before him again, but apart, where there were no witnesses. Then in few words he bade him stand on his guard, for his last hour was come. The knight said nothing of his defenceless state as prisoner, but simply demanded that he should not condemn him unheard. Though Lancaster had determined not to grant him a hearing, there was a quiet determination about Sir Humfry which had often made itself felt on former occasions as a restraining power in Lancaster's stormy moods.

So, in spite of his unwillingness to listen, Sir Humfry unfolded to him the whole story, appealing to his knowledge of his own loyalty as a friend of many years, and bringing in, too, the corroborating testimony that could be given by the Lady Cicely, if required.

As Lancaster listened, conviction entered his soul. Ruddall's words bore the impress of truth, and agreed with all he had known before of his wife's goodness and purity. In a moment he lived through an age of horror and self-condemnation. His soul was seized with an agony of repentance as fierce as his wrath had been; he saw himself a murderer, separated for ever from everything good and holy, accusing voices muttered in his ears, a sudden darkness came upon him and the haughty Henry of Lancaster fell heavily at his prisoner's feet.

It was long ere he recovered consciousness, and then he found

himself alone with Ruddall, who had called no witnesses of his weakness.

"Humfry," said he, his voice weak and broken, "slay me! I am a murderer worse than Cain. What a heritage of shame for my poor boy! A wretch am I, unfit to live any longer! I will go forth and spend this useless strength in battle against the infidels. But first I must give all those fair manors that came with her to the Church, that prayer unceasing may ascend for her and for me too; perchance at last I may be assoilzied from this crime. But no! that cannot be!—it is too black for pardon!"

Sir Humfry was a good man and faithful friend; though the Earl offered him liberty to go where he would, he could not find it in him to leave him a prey to despair. He strove to deepen his penitence and induce him to seek ghostly aid.

It was years since Lancaster had bent his stubborn knee before earthly or heavenly sovereign, and even now his self-abasement did not altogether satisfy the good Father Edmund, from whom he seemed rather to wrench his absolution than to crave it, while he startled him into dumb horror by the vehemence of his self-accusations.

Eager now to complete his expiation by the transfer of his lands before he left England for ever, Earl Henry, accompanied by Ruddall, revisited Kempsford and found that the usurper had fled from his domains on the king's fall.

The whole country-side would have welcomed Lancaster's return with noisy demonstrations, but his gloomy, impassive demeanour repressed all signs of joy, and revived the whispered story of his guilt, which some had thought an invention of Boyfield's, to account for Lady Maud's strange disappearance.

It seemed indeed that her uneasy spirit desired to give testimony of foul play; for a girl, wandering out in the dusk to meet her sweetheart, had seen a woman's figure, closely veiled, glide by her along the yews, wringing her hands and crying dolefully. She knew it for the Lady Maud's spirit, and fled away as well as her trembling limbs would let her. No one dared trust themselves in the garden after dark, for then the flutter of a woman's dress was sure to scare them away.

A groom had once concealed himself behind the yew-hedge to watch for the apparition, but had swooned with fright on hearing a heavy groan close to his elbow.

However, Lancaster's restless mood urged him, when night fell, to pace the Walk and take his fill of agonising remorse. The retainers kept back Sir Humfry, to tell him of the danger their master was incurring from perhaps crossing the Presence that haunted the lonely walk.

The clear moonlight was sleeping on the grass, and on the quiet river and wide fields beyond—a peaceful scene that could by no means allay the anguish that gnawed away Lancaster's guilty soul.

“A life's repentance for a moment's guilt, and yet what avails it?” he muttered, with a heavy sigh, as he leant, half-hidden by an embrasure of the low parapet.

Suddenly he became aware of a Presence. Raising himself he saw a woman's graceful form not far from him. His heart gave a great bound and then stood still. An impulse of re-awakened love had urged him to rush forward and embrace what seemed his wife, but conscience held him back from further offending her injured spirit, and he watched her in breathless awe with such a tightening of his heartstrings that the blood was ready to burst from his throbbing temples.

The woman, however, did not notice him. Throwing back her thick veil, she gazed at the placid Isis, gliding by under the tremulous moonbeams. Then her countenance, lovely in its mournfulness, changed to an expression of horror, and she wailed piteously, wringing her hands:

“Murdered, foully murdered! oh! cruel husband!”

The Earl could stand it no longer. Spirit or not, he must soothe her distress.

His nerves strung to their highest tension, he flung himself at his wife's feet.

“Maud,” he cried, “sweet Maud, forgive thy wretched husband! Be comforted. I have most cause for grief. Art thou not in Paradise, where I can nevermore come near thee?”

At his voice she started painfully, turned full on him her large dark eyes that shone like stars in her wan, pale face, then spreading out her hands with a vague, undecided gesture, of repulsion he thought, uttering a stifled groan she fell prostrate on the grass and lay still.

It was natural for Henry of Lancaster to chafe her cold hands in his and by every endearing name try to recall her to conscious-

ness, but he felt like a man in a dream, and a strange hope sprang up within him, Had she disappeared as suddenly as she came he would have felt no surprise, but she had fainted. Could spirits faint?

A voice sounded in his ear. It was the Lady Cicely's.

"Fear not, my son," she said, "she died not on that fearful night. But mad she is, and wanders forth often hither, then we follow her to save her from mischance, as before we saved her from the waters. See, she opens her eyes. Pray God, her reason be restored."

In a whirl of conflicting emotions too great for words, Lancaster watched his wife's opening eyes; they rested on him without horror, nay more, there was a look of recognition and of welcome.

With love unspeakable, humble, repentant, grateful, Lancaster gathered her in his arms and renewed his broken vows of honour and fealty. And the Lady Maud rested in his embrace like a tired child, quite forgetful of his unworthiness, for her love was "stronger than death."

ELISE D'ARGENT, B.A.

Famous Poets.

II.

WILLIAM COWPER.

WHERE are now the readers of Cowper's poems? And yet, some years ago, he enjoyed a high and unequalled popularity, both among men of letters and in the religious world, and new editions of his works were constantly being issued by the press. The subject of his life has been literally exhausted; volumes have been written about him, drawn from but scanty materials. In an age like the present, it may be safely admitted that brevity has its merits, and therefore, to lovers of Cowper's poems, this short sketch of his life may be welcome.

William Cowper, equally celebrated for the splendour of his talents, and the piety and innocence of his life, was born on the 15th of November, 1731, in the rectory house at Great Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire. His father, John Cowper, D.D., rector of that parish, and one of the chaplains to George II., was the second son of Spenser Cowper, a judge in the Court of Common Pleas, and nephew to Earl Cowper, Lord Chancellor of England.

His mother, Anne, daughter of Roger Donne, Esq., of Ludham Hall, in Norfolk, was allied to several noble houses, which, in their turn, traced their pedigree to Henry III., King of England, and in this way, we are told, "the highest blood in the realm flowed in the veins of the modest and unassuming Cowper." The divine and poet Donne also sprang from this family.

From an early age, and through the greater part of his life, Cowper was a victim to morbid sensibility, and a settled melancholy overshadowed his spirit. Although possessing a mind deeply imbued with knowledge, not unfortified by philosophy, and the seat of the purest religion, yet, a more striking instance than his cannot be found of the truth of the statement, that the temperament of genius is akin to insanity, or, as Dryden more vividly expresses it, that :

"Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide."

Cowper's mother, who died at the early age of thirty four, in

November, 1737, appears to have been a woman of great sweetness of temper, as well as considerable mental endowments. The impression made upon the spirits of her son by her death was never effaced; at the distance of fifty years he assured a friend that scarcely a week passed in which he did not think of her; and though he had not completed his sixth year when she died, neither time nor intercourse with the world appears to have dispelled her image or virtues from his mind. On the sight of her picture he gave vent to his feelings in a poem fraught with so much pathos and individuality of description, as to leave no doubt that he drew from his memory rather than his imagination.

On the death of his mother he was placed under the care of Dr. Pitman, who kept a considerable school at Market Street, a few miles distant from his home. Here he remained for two years, but the excessive gentleness and sensibility of the poet's nature, instead of exciting, as in after-life, the sympathy of his companions, only exposed him to continual persecution. He complains of one boy in particular, who, at the age of fifteen, was a perfect adept in the art of tormenting, and who maliciously singled him out as an object on which to vent the cruelty of his disposition. But the barbarity of this little tyrant being at length discovered, he was expelled from the school, though not until his savage conduct had impressed on Cowper's mind such a dread of his figure, that he confesses he was "afraid to lift his eyes upon him higher than his knees, and knew him better by his shoe-buckles than any other part of his dress."

Those who ascribe to accidental circumstances, and early impressions, all the diversity that prevails in human character, might no doubt refer to this, and similar incidents, as sufficient to account for that habitual melancholy and depression of spirits which formed the bane of the poet's life; and it seems at least certain, that it was here he imbibed those prejudices which he has so eloquently recorded in his poem on public seminaries.

When Cowper was eight years old he was threatened with blindness, and his friends placed him under the care of a female oculist residing in London. Under her treatment his sight was so far restored, that he was enabled to attend Westminster School, under Dr. Nichols, where, four years afterwards, he was attacked by the small-pox, a distemper which had the singular

effect of removing the imperfection of his sight, though his eyes always continued to be subject to inflammation. From the age of fourteen he dated his first beginning to "dabble in rhyme," and translated an elegy of Tibullus. His constitutional malady here began to manifest itself in fits of despondency.

On leaving Westminster, he was articled for three years to Mr. Chapman, a respectable solicitor in London, and in 1752 took chambers in the Temple, but the pursuit of the law was very little suited to his disposition, as appears from the following quotation :

"I did," he says, in a letter to his cousin, Lady Hesketh, "actually live three years with Mr. Chapman, a solicitor ; that is to say, I slept three years in his house ; but I lived, that is to say, I spent my days in Southampton Row, as you very well remember. There was I, and the future Lord Chancellor,* constantly employed from morning to night in giggling, and making giggle, instead of studying the law."

It was at this time that Cowper formed an attachment, which has been thought to have exercised a melancholy influence over the whole of his after life. One night, when he was at the play, he pointed out to a friend, a lady on whom he had set his affections.

This was, no doubt, Theodora Cowper, the beautiful and accomplished daughter of his uncle, Ashley Cowper, who, on the grounds of their being cousins, refused to consent to their marriage. Cowper, however, considered this objection of little weight, but when he found the determination of her father unalterable, he held no further intercourse with her, nor did the lovers ever meet again. The lady, whose affection neither time nor absence diminished, died unmarried in 1824.

Cowper resided in the Temple nearly twelve years, though he was never reconciled to his professional studies. He very justly remarks that, "the colour of our whole life is generally such as the three or four years, in which we are our own masters, make it." A man's inclination, however, is in general no bad index to his talents ; at all events posterity has rejoiced that, instead of shining on the bench or at the bar, he devoted his talents to their natural channel. If Cowper ever lived like a man of the world, it was during his residence in the Temple ; for, notwithstanding his shyness, he became acquainted with several dis-

* Thurlow, who at that time was his fellow-clerk.

tinguished literary men, and also translated several odes of Horace. In one of his letters, he speaks of having, while in the Temple, "produced several half-penny ballads, two or three of which had the honour to be popular."

A great part of his patrimony being now spent, poverty loomed in the distance. A crisis in his fate, in short, appeared fast approaching, when some powerful friends obtained for him a nomination to the offices of reading-clerk, and clerk to the committees of the House of Lords. He was now perplexed between his wish to accept these appointments and his fear of being unequal to the duties of them, when another office of much less value, that of clerk of the journals to the same House, happened to fall vacant, and, in the hope of being more competent to fill it, he exchanged it for the other two. A public exhibition of himself, however, being like mortal poison, to use his own words, when a dispute about his appointment rendered it necessary that he should appear before the Lords in order to prove his competence, the dread came on him with such force that he lost his reason, and made repeated attempts at self-destruction. It was now no longer safe to leave him in his own keeping, and in December, 1763, he was consigned to the care of Doctor Cotton, of St. Alban's, where he remained a year and a half, and then removed to Huntingdon, in order to be near his brother John, who resided at Cambridge.

Cowper's personal appearance was very prepossessing; he was of middle height, with limbs strongly framed; hair of light brown, eyes of a bluish grey, and ruddy complexion.

"It is impossible to regard without wonder the mixture of imbecility and power exhibited in his mind. With the weakness of an infant, scared at shadows, and agonized by dreams; when the pen was in his hand, he became another being, who could give a charm to the homeliest features of nature, or the commonest objects of domestic life; could raise sport out of trifles, and in his graver moods exert a force like that of the prophet sent to awaken mankind out of delusions more serious than his own."

At Huntingdon he soon contracted an intimacy with the family of the Rev. Mr. Unwin. The father was a man of sense, great learning, and remarkable simplicity; the mother, the daughter of a tradesman at Ely, was endowed with a well-

cultivated understanding, and, as Cowper termed it, the politeness of a duchess. From a frequent visitor, it was not long before he became an inmate of their family, and from that time he was scarcely ever separated for a day or an hour from the society of Mrs. Unwin, and the life which the poet led in the devout circle was more like a "Penitentiary friar than a Protestant layman."

In the month of July, 1767, Mr. Unwin was thrown from his horse, while riding to church on a Sunday morning, and died from a fracture of the skull. Shortly after this event, Mrs. Unwin, to whom Huntingdon had now lost all its charms, changed her place of residence to Olney, in Buckinghamshire, whither they were drawn by the esteem they had for the Rev. John Newton, curate of that place, and the author of many religious works. Here Cowper continued in the same sequestered habits of life, endearing himself to all around. Here he wrote the "Olney Hymns," which were intended to perpetuate the remembrance of his friendship for Newton.

In March, 1770, he lost his brother, and became again plunged in the darkest melancholy; after a time he recovered sufficiently to find amusement in the taming of three hares. The merit of teaching pointers to set has long been ascribed to an English poet, and we believe Cowper was the first man who thought it worth while to study the disposition of hares. He also kept canaries, pigeons, and a beautiful spaniel, called Beau, which attended him on all occasions, and which he has celebrated in song.

Cowper's letters to his friends were highly prized and praised; these, with some minor poems, in all of which there appears a rich vein of humour, constituted his chief employment until the month of December, 1780. "The easy and unaffected style of his epistles, the gratitude and tenderness they discover for his friends, the exquisite sallies of humour always regulated by a nice sense of decorum, the graceful and unexpected turns given to the most trivial things, his just manner of thinking on all subjects of a more serious kind, excepting that in which his delusion is concerned, and even the interest excited by that strange delusion itself, all contribute to make these writings, never intended to be read by any one but those to whom they were addressed, the most delightful in their way of any that the English language has produced."

It was not until the advanced age of fifty that Cowper appeared before the world as an author ; thus, at a time when many men think of resigning the pen he heroically took his up, and produced a series of poems which, in point of vigour, variety and originality, have not been surpassed since the days of Shakespeare and Milton.

In little more than a quarter of a year from the time he began to compose, he had finished the poems entitled, "Table Talk," "The Progress of Error," "Truth," and "Expostulation." The appearance of "The Task," shortly afterwards, brought the whole of his poems into notice.

During the first year of his authorship Cowper made the acquaintance of the accomplished Lady Austen, and became so attached to her that he at last addressed her by the endearing name of sister. It was this lady who watched his health, shared his walks, and directed his studies ; and when she saw him about to relapse into dejection, it was her custom to summon all her powers of sprightliness and good humour, to amuse and invigorate his failing energies ; and it was on one of these occasions that she related to him the facetious story of John Gilpin, from which he composed his amusing ballad.

It is to Lady Austen, also, we are indebted for the idea of "The Task." Being fond of blank verse, and a great admirer of Milton, she tried to induce Cowper to attempt something in his style, and after much solicitation, he promised to comply with her request, on condition that she would furnish him with a subject. "O !" she replied, "you can never be in want of a subject. You can write upon any—write upon this sofa !" The subject, no doubt, seemed a strange one ; yet he kept his word ; and thus, from a hint thrown out at random, and half in jest, arose a poem of many thousand lines.

Notwithstanding his timidity and secluded habits, Cowper was never so happy as when in the society of women ; and it is remarkable, that every lady with whom he ever contracted a friendship felt so strongly interested in his welfare, that she seemed to think it no sacrifice, but, on the contrary, a very great honour, to share the solitude and cheer the gloom of the recluse of Olney.

There is, in the feminine character, a resemblance to his own sensitive nature, which accounts for his platonic attachments ; but

at last Mrs. Unwin and Lady Austen could no longer live peacefully together, jealousy being the cause, and the removal of Lady Austen was the consequence.

The void, thus made, was soon filled by his cousin, Lady Hesketh. There appears to have been in the conversation of Cowper, as in that of Swift, a fascination not easy for the female heart to resist. In both it was exerted involuntarily; but of one the influence was disastrous, of the other gentle and serene.

In November, 1786, he removed with Mrs. Unwin to the village of Weston; here he had free access to the delightful pleasure-grounds of Sir John Throckmorton, with whose family he soon became intimate, and to whom some of his sprightliest and most pleasing poems are addressed.

It was at this time he completed his translation of "Homer," often devoting eight hours a day to its accomplishment, and in 1790 he completed his translation of the "Iliad," and the "Odyssey." This great undertaking he commenced at the age of fifty-three, and executed it in little more than ten years.

His next engagement was an edition of Milton, to be embellished with the designs of Fuseli; this brought him acquainted with Hayley, a gentleman who soon grew so much into his favour that he tells his cousin, Lady Hesketh, in a letter written about this time, that he accounted him the chief acquisition his verse had ever procured him. He and Mrs. Unwin visited Hayley at his beautiful residence at Eartham in Sussex; a proof of Cowper's great regard, as he had not slept under the roof of a stranger for more than twenty years.

In 1794, a pension of three hundred pounds was obtained for Cowper from Government. But it came too late. Mrs. Unwin had now become old and weak, and he cared not for good fortune in which she could not share; his means had always been small, and much of her property had been already consumed, although their slender means of subsistence were helped out by the contributions of friends, and by the profits derived from his works.

But what affected Cowper beyond every other misfortune was the bodily sufferings of his aged friend, whose infirmities were such, that it formed the chief business of his life to repay those attentions which, under Providence, had been the means, years ago, of preserving to him his reason and his life.

But to a mind so sensitive, and a frame so shattered, what

employment can be conceived more unsuitable than that of nursing? Yet this now became the daily, nay hourly, occupation of the celebrated poet; and when we combine with the pain he must have suffered, his apprehensions of future poverty, and despair of ever resuming his pen, it will be hardly necessary to say he suffered the extreme of human misery.

For the remainder of his life, Cowper was either sunk in despondency, or haunted by imaginary terrors, and it was thought advisable that he should be removed from Weston. His young kinsman, John Johnson, who had been his frequent guest, his amanuensis, and his favourite companion, undertook to convey him and Mrs. Unwin into Norfolk, where many of his maternal relatives were settled, and henceforth tended him with the care of an affectionate son.

Mrs. Unwin died at Dereham, in Norfolk, in 1796. Cowper, after taking a last look at his old friend, started away with a vehement expression of sorrow, and never again mentioned her name. No object now was able to give him pleasure.

In the beginning of the next year, symptoms of dropsy appeared in his feet and legs. Soon afterwards, he became so feeble as not to bear motion in a carriage, and by the end of March he was confined to his bedroom. As his sufferings through life had been alleviated by female tenderness, so love followed him to the last. Mr. Johnson and Miss Perowne—a lady who assisted in watching over him—ministered to his dying wants, and at five in the morning of April 25th, the much-tried poet became insensible, and about twelve hours afterwards expired without a struggle. He was buried in the same church as Mrs. Unwin, at Dereham, and a monument was erected over his grave by Lady Hesketh, bearing the following inscription by his friend Hayley:

“Ye, who with warmth the public triumph feel
Of talents, dignified by sacred zeal,
Here, to devotion's bard devoutly just,
Pay your fond tribute due to Cowper's dust!
England, exulting in his spotless fame,
Ranks with her dearest sons his favourite name.
Sense, fancy, wit, suffice not all to raise
So clear a title to affection's praise;
His highest honours to the heart belong,
His virtues formed the magic of his song.

CHARLOTTE A. PRICE.

A Cornish Maid.

BY BARBARA LAKE,

Author of "THE BETRAYAL OF REUBEN HOLT," "A PROFITLESS
QUEST," etc. etc.

CHAPTER VI.

EAVESDROPPING.

TWO or three days after this unsatisfactory scene in the smithy kitchen, and just as the sun was setting, Will Ashdown, restless and unhappy, was endeavouring to allay the perturbation of his troubled spirit by a solitary ramble through the quiet lanes—winding in all directions and leading nowhere in particular—around Treverdale.

Will was by no means a bad fellow, as fellows go, and he was dissatisfied with himself, and sorry for Mary, but—very madly in love with Jenny Caerden. Yet, resolutely though he refused to recognise it, he had an intuitive conviction that in spite of her alluring glances, Jenny had no real regard for him, and he was disposed to be self-commiserating and to fancy himself hardly used by Fate, because matters—as they usually do, in this cross-grained world—had gone perversely with him.

Why had it happened to him that his love should have wandered from Mary Seaton to Jenny Caerden? he asked himself. Mary was undoubtedly the better girl of the two, she would make by far the better wife, and he was very fond of her, still—in a sort of way; but Jenny was so lovely, so bright, so charming, and—and hadn't she given him clearly to understand that it would take but little to make her break the frail tie existing between herself and Clem Freer? And who could blame her if she had grown weary of such a tie?—a tie that promised so little comfort for the future. Anyhow, no mortal consideration should stand in his way, if ever it fell to his happy lot to give her . . .

But at this point Will's eyes fell on the object of his thoughts, standing midway up the lane into which he was turning; and his soliloquy came to an abrupt end.

This particular lane ran parallel with the river, and was divided from the long, irregular garden of the Mill House by only a thick hedge of thorn and bramble, and when Will first caught sight of Jenny, she was craning her pretty neck and straining her eyes, in an effort to see the Mill House windows.

That she was walking in this direction with any idea of meeting ugly little Tom Penrose, Will never suspected; but this having been, in truth, her object, she felt uncomfortable under his admiring gaze, and was inclined to resent his appearance on the scene of her exploits. But her insatiable love of conquest prompted her to avoid any show of vexation, and Will, misinterpreting her momentary flurry, was raised to a heaven of bliss by the flush that mounted to her face at his undesired approach.

"Lors, Will Ashden!" she exclaimed, suffering her hand to linger in his warm clasp considerably longer than their relative circumstances warranted, "you'm allus comin' 'pon wan, sudden like! P'r'aps 'tis 'cos I'm so often thinken' o' 'ee."

Jenny's fair face wore its sweetest smile as she made this delusive statement, for she had already come to the conclusion that the miller was from home—that he had probably gone "up street" to call on a customer, or to spend an hour at the "Beaker," and she never missed a chance of adding a link to the chain that held her victims in thrall. So, feeling secure from espionage, she smiled and sighed, and suffered Will Ashdown to keep possession of her hand.

"Do you often think of me, Jenny?" he asked sentimentally.

"Iss, i'deed I do," she asserted, adding, with a flattering glance "Tisn't every wan that's like you—you'm so kind an' good, an' I couldn't help thinkin' o' 'ee, if I wanted to."

"But you don't want to?" in the tenderest of tones.

"Awh, you mustn't ask me sech things!—'tisn't right, you know."

"No," sighed Will; "I suppose it isn't—yet, at any rate. I suppose I mustn't speak till you give me leave, so I'll be silent till you do. Have you been walking long?"

"Lors, no—only a minnet or two. 'Tis sech a nice evenin', an' I did so want a breath o' fresh air."

"I don't think you'll get much air down here—the miller's

trees keep it all off. What a fine show of apples he's got this summer. Is he in his garden?" trying to peer through the thick mass of foliage clothing the hedge.

"T' miller? What, Tom Penrose?" asked Jenny, innocently "Lors, how'm I to know? I ha'n't looked. I never gi' the miller a sing'l thought—un ain't no fave'rit o' mine."

Oh, Jenny, Jenny, what a pack of fibs!

"I don't think he's a favourite of anyone's," declared Will. "He's such a wretched little skinflint!"

"Be un?" laughed Jenny. "Awh, waal, I doan't know aught about un—un's ways doan't matter to me, a bit."

"Of course they don't," agreed Will. "But sha'n't we walk on? We might get more air on the higher ground."

"Iss, us might, an' I should enjoy a walk wi' 'ee, very much; but I must get back to home—t' chil'ren ain't put to bed yet."

"Oh, bother the children! Can't they get to bed without you, for once in a way?"

"Iss, I dessay 'em could, but I can't abear to seem 'glectfu' o' they."

"You must let me walk home with you, anyhow."

"Awh, no, I can't—you mustn't go 'yond t' end o' t' lane. Folks 'ud say sech things—they be so spitefu', hereabouts."

"Well, if I mustn't go further than the end of the lane, I suppose I mustn't," said Will, inwardly grateful for the scarcely-expected concession; "but there's no need to hurry."

And drawing Jenny's unresisting hand through his arm, the two—undisturbed by a doubt as to the privacy of their meeting—wandered slowly away down the lane.

They might have felt less easy in their minds, however, could they have seen the expression on the sallow visage of the miller as it cautiously appeared above the hedge as soon as their backs were safely turned.

"So, so, my turtle-doves," muttered the spy as, having carefully secured a firm footing on the tumble-down old bench behind which he had been crouching, he leant over the hedge to get a look at the retreating figures, "that's how the wind blows, is it? E'm. Now, I wonder whether that sly little baggage planned the meeting, or whether it came about accidental? I wish I'd been down a bit sooner. Anyway, she didn't dream I was gettin' a share o' the talk, that's certain. But, what a little deevil she is. Jest

my sort, though. Lord, what a fine time I shall have o' it breakin' her in! An' so you never 'gi' t' miller a sing'l thought, don't 'ee, my beauty?" mimicking Jenny's voice. "'And un ain't no fave'rit' o' yourn,' ain't he? All right, chickums—that makes another rod I 'ull have in pickle for 'ee by time 'tis wanted. But you wasn't asked no question about your thoughts an' your likin's, my lamb, and when a woman ses a thing as she's no call to say, 'tis pretty sure she's flammin'. So, maybe, there's one to *my* score, after all. But, who 'ud ha' thought o' that big fool, Ashdown, gettin' saft on she?—an' he goin' to wed t' other maid, too. Lord, what a set there be i' the world, to be sure! But I 'ull not ha' you danglin' after the maid / be goin' to wed, Will Ashdown, an' so I tell you. An' I'll give you a back-fall afore you'm much older, for sayin' as I be a skinflint—sure as you'm born, I will! Skinflint, am I? Waal an' good, my lad. I 'ull skinflint you, see if I doan't. But how?—that's the first thing to be settled. Waal, I 'ull go in an' smoke a pipe over it—I dessay I shall hit on somethin'. 'Twoan't be me if I doan't, anyway!"

CHAPTER VII.

AN ANONYMOUS LETTER.

UPWARDS of a week had passed since Clem Freer had offered to release Jenny Caerden from her promise, and during that time he had left no stone unturned in his endeavours to obtain work somewhere in the near or surrounding neighbourhoods; all his efforts, however, had ended in failure, and now, as he told himself, he was on his "beam-ends." He had purposely avoided seeing Jenny—thinking it better that she should be left, unbiassed by his presence, to make up her mind on the all-important question of his going to London; but the time had at length arrived when she must decide for or against the move.

It had been on a Wednesday evening that he last saw her, and now it was Thursday morning in the following week. The weather was still hot and sunshiny, and, on the previous day, Clem had set out, with the earliest streak of dawn, for a ten-miles-distant town, in the hope of getting some work of which he had heard, and which would have afforded him employment for several weeks. But, early as he was in applying for it, he

was just half-an-hour too late—another man having stepped in before him; and when—having tramped up and down the town all day, in the vain quest for another job—he returned to his poor lodging, he was thoroughly worn out and dispirited.

It was long past midnight by time he reached home, and the other inmates of the cottage had long been in bed. But the door was unfastened, and quietly making his way to his own room, he flung himself on his hard couch.

Hard or soft, however, it made no difference to him; for falling asleep as soon as his head touched the pillow, he lay in dreamless oblivion of all earthly things, till a loud banging at his door, late on the following morning, aroused him to practical consciousness.

"I say, Clem Freer, ain't 'ee agoin' to git up, no more?" inquired his loud-voiced landlady, thrusting her head, with scant ceremony, inside the room. "'Tis jest on ten er'clock—what be 'ee thinkin' 'bout? Here, I foun' thickee letter shoved under t' door, when I got down—p'r'aps 'tis 'bout some more wark." And, flinging the soiled and tumbled letter on to the bed, she took her departure.

For a minute or so longer Clem was too sleepy to possess himself of the grubby-looking missive—regarding it with dreamy, opening and closing eyes. Then the landlady's suggestion that it might refer to some sort of work, found its way fully to his brain, and reaching out his hand, he took the letter up and looked at it.

"Clem freer," was the only superscription the envelope bore; and Clem yawned, incuriously, as his eyes rested on the cramped and ill-formed characters which set forth his name. Lazily breaking the envelope, he ran his eyes over its contents, but as he did so, his drowsiness vanished, and starting up in bed, he held the missive from him at arm's length—staring at it, for a full minute, with a look of horror that could scarcely have been surpassed had he been gazing on his death-warrant.

"What—villain has sent me this?" he cried in low, hoarse tones. And he struck the paper, so fiercely, that it split from end to end.

Springing from the bed, he plunged his head into a great bowl of water, standing on a shelf fitted into a corner of the room by

way of a wash-stand, and hurrying on his clothes, he again took the letter in his hand.

"CLEM FREER,

"If you donte ta care, wil Ashdown ull cut you out wi Jenny caerden. un's sweet on She an un's Swore to git her from ee, an Her maynt be so ard to git as you may think.

"A FREND."

Thus ran the precious epistle ; and Clem's white teeth set themselves together, and his deep blue eyes flashed as he reperused it.

"A friend !" he muttered. "I wish I had you by the throat, my friend ! I'd teach you how to send such a vile thing as this to me. But who can have done it ?—that's the question." And again he examined the torn letter, closely.

It was clear, even to his inexperienced eyes, that the missive had been penned with an elaborate effort to conceal the writer's identity, and as he continued to gaze at it, half-a-dozen different persons passed before his mental vision as its possible author—innocent Mrs. Taptun of "The Foaming Beaker," being amongst the number. Oddly enough, his suspicions never once glanced towards Tom Penrose, the miller ; and inwardly acquitting all those on whom for a few moments his doubts had fallen, he began to consider what steps to take in the matter.

"'Tis a cruel lie, so far as my poor darling is concerned," he told himself. "'Tis a cruel and infamous lie, and I won't say a word to her about it. 'Twould grieve her if she fancied me likely to think the tale was true. No, my Jenny, I won't insult you by saying a single word to you about it. I daresay 'twould be best to burn the lying thing, and think no more of it ; but I mustn't do that. It makes a straight charge against Ashdown, and 'twill be only acting fair by him, to give him a chance of proving it false. For 'tisn't likely he'd think anything of Jenny, when he's got such a good little maid as Mary Seaton to his share—though, of course, she can't hold a candle to *my* maid. 'Tis true there don't seem to be much love lost between him and me, for some reason or other ; but, be it so or not, I'll take this hateful scrawl over to his place, and hear what he's got to say about it."

And thrusting the letter into his pocket, he ran down the narrow, ladder-like stairs, hastily drank the lukewarm decoction

which his landlady called tea, and catching up the butterless roll that was to serve him for breakfast, he hurried out over the moors on his way to Treverdale.

The clock of St. Margaret's, away up the High Street, was striking eleven, and its chimes fell dimly on Clem's ears, as he approached the smithy at the entrance to the village. Will Ashdown was alone—hard at work on some article of red-hot iron from which he was beating a thick shower of brilliant, upward-flying sparks, and the ring of his hammer added its quota of cheerful sound to the distant tinkle of sheep-bells on the sun-bright hills, the singing of birds, and the hum of bees.

"I want a word with you, Ashdown," said Clem, walking up to the forge, and speaking calmly, though there was something in the set expression of his face which warned Will that there was mischief in the wind.

"All right," he answered, nonchalantly, and giving another tap or two to the glowing iron. Then, flinging aside his mighty hammer, and squaring his fine, broad shoulders, he faced about towards his visitor. "Well, what is it?" he asked. "I haven't much time on my hands, but I can listen for a few minutes, if you'll say what you want."

"'Tis simply this that I want," began Clem, nettled already by the other's off-hand bearing. "I have got a letter here"—touching his pocket—"that tells me a tale about you, which I want explained. I hope—nay, I'll say I believe—you ain't the scamp it makes you out, and if you'll tell me, fair and honest, that it speaks nothing but a miserable pack of lies, I'll fling it into the flames yonder, and think of it no more. God knows I don't want to believe it true, and if you'll say it isn't, I'll beg your pardon for thinking a moment's ill of you—I'll ask you to take my hand as a token you don't bear malice."

"All right," said Will again. "Show me the letter."

And Clem, handing over the damaged paper, waited, with almost breathless anxiety, while the reader made himself acquainted with its contents.

"Well?" he asked, as the other slowly refolded the letter. "What have you got to say to it?"

"Nothing," returned Will, jerking the missive back to its owner. And without lifting his eyes, he turned once more to the forge.

"Nothing!" echoed Clem. "You sorry hound!—do you think I'll let you off with such an answer as that?"

"Let me off!" mocked Will, stretching wide his gladiator-like arms, with a laugh; and then folding them behind his head, he leant back against the blackened wall of the smithy.

"Is there any truth in what this thing says?" demanded Clem, his eyes flashing ominously, as he struck the paper he held out. "Come, I mean to have a plain answer—aye or nay—before I leave you. Is there any truth, I ask, in what this cursed thing says of you?"

"Oh, well," returned Will, with a shrug of callous indifference (though, verily, he was feeling anything but proud of himself), "there may or there mayn't be. All I can say is, if a fellow don't look after his own preserves as he ought to, someone else'll do it for him—that's all!"

"You cur!" hissed Clem breathlessly. "Do you dare to hint that—that—that my Je—that my promised wife gives you any encouragement?"

"No," cried Will, starting to an upright position. "No; I don't say that. Mark me, I can't say that!"

"But you have done your best to lead her to it?" pursued Clem.

"Yes—and what's more," gazing defiantly at his catechiser, "I mean to do my best still, if she'll let me!"

This was an ill-advised declaration of Will's, for before he had time to measure its effect, or to put himself on the defensive, Clem, with the spring of a tiger, caught him by the throat in a choking grip, and shaking him as if he were a kitten, flung him with all the strength of his righteous indignation on to a heap of old and rusty iron, at the far end of the smithy.

But only for a moment did the astonished young Vulcan remain in this humiliating position. Springing to his feet, he closed with his assailant, and for a minute or more it was doubtful which of the combatants would gain the mastery of the other. Both were of equal height, though Will was the stouter and more strongly built; but Clem was an adept in all athletic exercises, and after a fierce struggle, and a few heavy blows from either side, he once more flung the stalwart young smith on the heap of old iron.

This time, however, the fallen hero's head came into sharp

contact with the broken tire of a wheel, and after an ineffectual effort to regain his feet, he fell back, in an unconscious and terribly sanguinary condition. At this moment, too, a door at the top of a couple of steps leading into the house, was flung back, and Mary Seaton, with horrified eyes and hands pressed on her bosom, stood looking down on the scene.

"Oh, Clem Freer, what have you done?" she wailed. And flying down the steps, she flung herself on the iron by Will's side, and lifted his head to her lap. "Oh, cruel, cruel," looking up, with wild eyes at Clem, "you've killed him—you have killed him!"

"No, no, he isn't dead," said Clem, beginning, under her agonized gaze, to feel some compunction for his deed of violence. "He will be all right, in a minute or two."

And kneeling down, he laid a hand on his late opponent's breast.

"You needn't be alarmed, Mary Seaton," he said; "there's not much harm done. He'll come to, presently."

"Are you sure—quite sure?" asked Mary, only half convinced. "I can't feel him breathe."

"I'm quite sure. But he's got an ugly knock on the head, and p'raps the doctor had better see to it."

"Take off his neckerchief and bind the wound up," ordered Mary, recovering her presence of mind as her fears subsided—adding, when he had done his best to fulfil her command, "And now you'd better go, Clem Freer. Will mustn't find you here when he comes to—I won't have him vexed by the sight of you."

"Yes, I may as well go," said Clem, getting to his feet. "I had better never have come, for any good I have gained or given!"

"Stay a minute," begged Mary, as he turned to depart. "Will you—will you do me a kind turn?"

"To be sure I will, if I can."

"Then don't tell anyone—*anyone*—how or why this happened," pointing to the wound on Will's head. "Let folks think it an accident. Do; oh, do, will you?"

"Folks can think anything they like for aught I shall tell them, Mary Seaton."

"Thank you. And—and—stay a bit longer—I—I know you

have some cause to complain of Will, and, maybe, so have I; but things will come right again, p'r'aps, if they are let alone. After all, too," she went on, as Clem kept silence, "they mayn't be so bad as you think, and you mustn't say a word to Jenny. It couldn't do any good, and I don't believe—oh, Clem Freer I'm *sure*, she doesn't give Will a thought—she's—she's too fond of *you*. I know it."

"God bless you, for those words," breathed Clem, fervently.

"I—can't think what's come to poor Will," continued Mary, with a tearless sob; "but I'll pray Heaven, every hour in the day, to keep him right."

"You're a good little maid, Mary Seaton," said Clem, "and I'm half sorry, for your sake, I didn't keep my temper with Ashdown. But he thought to carry things with too high a hand, and I . . . Well, it can't be helped, now, and he'll be none the worse for what he's got. At any rate, of this you may be sure—I will do your bidding as far as I can."

"Thank you, once again," returned Mary.

"Would you mind taking a hand that's a bit too rough sometimes?" asked Clem, after a moment's hesitation.

And the tears, breaking bounds, rolled down Mary's cheeks as she took the hand he offered; while he, flinging the wicked anonymous letter into the furnace, strode out of the smithy as Will began to show signs of returning life.

CHAPTER VIII.

PARTING

DEEPLY, faithfully—too faithfully—as Clem loved Jenny Caerden, a suspicion that she was not wholly blameless as regarded Will Ashdown, would force itself upon him, and many sadly conflictive emotions filled his breast as he took his way up the High Street.

His first intention had been to go direct to Jenny, but fearing she might gather something of his inward perturbation from his manner, he decided to wait till he had recovered his usual self-control. So, with this object in view, he turned out of the main thoroughfare, and made a detour of some miles—purposing to re-enter the village at the upper end.

It was not long before he succeeded in walking off something of his trouble and excitement. and then, having halted at a little wayside inn for a crust of bread-and-cheese, by way of dinner, he returned to Treverdale and, presenting himself at Jenny's door, found her ironing out her best and only muslin gown.

"Lors, Clem," she cried, setting down her iron and flinging herself with exuberant delight into his arms, "I be so glad to see 'ee! I felt sure 'ee was comin' over, 'cos I was dreamin' o' 'ee all t' night. 'T seems sech a long, long time since us met, las' week.

And she kissed him and cooed over him, as she had a pretty trick of doing—especially when she had been behaving, or was about to behave, in a way which, to say the least of it, was anything but fair to him. But beneath the charm of her soothing treatment, Clem's dim and undesired suspicions melted into nothingness, and he felt like a mean and treacherous villain, for having entertained a moment's doubt of her love and truth. Her love was his—was his alone, and Mary Seaton was right. What cared he for Will Ashdown or his absurd pretensions? What cared he for anonymous letters or for anything else, while his Jenny was so fond and so true?

"My pretty darling," he said, taking her face between his two palms and gazing, with tender devotion, into the depths of her dark eyes, "I don't believe there's a more loving or more faithful little maid than you, in the whole county."

"Why, o' course there isn't," laughed Jenny, lightly. "But,"—laying her hands on his shoulders, and throwing back her pretty head, the better to look at him—"what's t' matter wi' 'ee, Clem? You'm looking sad. An'—an'—" touching his cheek with her forefinger—"You ha' got a knock, ha'n't you?"

"Oh, 'tis nothing," answered Clem, evasively. "But how can I be aught else than sad, Jenny, when I have got to leave you?"

"Ha' 'ee made up your mind to go to Lon'on, then?" she queried, inwardly relieved that the onus of his going would not, after all, rest wholly on her own shoulders—that she would be able to persuade both herself and others, that he had taken the step entirely on his own responsibility.

"I'm afraid it must be so, dear," returned Clem, "though it is doubly hard to leave you just when it would be so much better that I should stay by your side. You have no mother, my poor

darling, and your father takes no care of you—'tis bitterly hard that I can't stay to guard you against the malice of evil tongues."

"W'haat evil tongues, Clem?" lifting startled eyes to his troubled face. "Ha' they—ha' they bin sayin' things about me?"

"'Twould be ill for anyone that dared to say a word against you, in my hearing, Jenny! But I wish I could stay near you. And I would stay, too, if only I could see the least chance of work ahead. But there isn't any to be had, dear, near nor far; and I can't see as 'tis likely there will be. So there's nothing for it but to seek it in London."

"'Tis sad for me," she sighed, applying her handkerchief to her eyes. "But if 'ee must go, 'ee must, I s'pose."

"Yes, 'must' is the only word for it! But you haven't forgotten what I said to you the other night, Jenny?—about freeing you from your promise, you know. I wouldn't——"

"Awh, now, doan't 'ee say no more 'bout thaat, Clem! There ain't no wan, i' t' whole wide world, that I care for but you, Clem Freer; an' I 'ull keep true to 'ee through good an' through ill, though you be gone twenty years an' more. Yes, I will—I will, i'deed."

"Oh, Jenny, Jenny," cried Clem, "I can't find words to tell how happy you make me! I knew you were true, dear—I did not doubt it; but somehow, it seems so good a thing, at this time, to have my faith in you strengthened by your own dear lips. You have given me new hope and courage, Jenny, and I shall go to London with a heart fuller than ever of love and trust."

"When will 'ee go, Clem?"

"I think I may as well go at once, dear. Why not to-morrow? There's nothing to hinder, and the sooner I go, the sooner I shall get back to you—or come to fetch you."

"Waal," with a long-drawn sigh, "if 'ee must go—an' I s'pose 'ee must—p'r'aps 'twill be best to go to wance. An' do 'ee make haste an' save up a big fortin', Clem. Oh, I do so hope 'ee woan't be long gettin' rich an' comin' back to wed me!"

"So do I, my poor darling—it won't be my fault if I don't. And you will write to me while I'm away, Jenny?—often—constantly?"

"Yes, o' course. 'T least, I ain't much o' a scholar, 'cos I ha' had scarce any teachin'; but I 'ull do my best. An' you see this?" holding up a tiny gold locket she had taken from its thick wrappings of cotton wool at the bottom of an old work-box. "'T has a bit o' your hair in it, you know."

"Yes, I know, dear."

"Waal, I ha' only wore it wance or twice since 'ee gave it to me, whe' us was first e'gaged; but now," placing it in her bosom, "I 'ull wear it allus, till 'ee comes back to me."

"My pretty darling! My poor little Jenny!" turning aside, so that she might not see the tears in his eyes.

"I ha'n't got a thing worth havin' to give 'ee for a keepsake," Jenny went on; "but"—ruthlessly cutting a tress of dark hair from her head and binding it round with a ribbon she had been wearing at her throat—"I 'ull gi' you this. An' do 'ee wear it next your heart, Clem, to keep 'ee true to me all t' time you be away. Will 'ee now?"

"Ay, will I—not only while I'm absent from you but to my dying day!" And, kissing the pretty *souvenir*, he laid it tenderly on his heart. "'Tis the best and dearest thing you could have given me, my Jenny—sweeter and more precious to me than silver or gold. And now, if I am to start to-morrow, 'tis time we parted. I have got my traps to put together, though that won't take long; but I must be up and off early. So one long, long kiss, dear—one last 'good-bye,' and then for London and a quick-made fortune. You must keep up your spirits while I'm away, dear, for I shall soon come back to you. And, Jenny, do you make fast friends with Mary Seaton. She's a good young maid, and I know she'll cheer and give you comfort, if ever you feel to want it. And remember this," holding her fast to his breast, "remember, when I leave Treverdale to-morrow morning, that 'twill be with a heart full of sunshine and hope—sunshine and hope which you have planted there. And now, good-bye, little girl. Good-bye, my Jenny!"

CHAPTER IX.

FRIENDLY ADVICE.

TWO months had passed since Clem Freer left Treverdale for London, and during all that time, Jenny had been fairly sober and subdued. She had given the miller few opportunities of speaking to her, and it was only occasionally that she rewarded the amorous glances he cast at her, with anything more encouraging than a laughing toss of the head.

But Tom Penrose, though he found constant occasion for passing Jenny's door, was content to "bide his time." He was a wily creature in his way, and he knew well enough that the girl when parting from her lover, had resolved to be true to him. He knew, too, that it would be unwise to pay her any very marked attention until these good resolutions should have worn themselves out—as he felt pretty certain they would do. For it was no secret to him that Jenny was changeful and unstable—fond of admiration, and, above all, of ease and plenty; and he chuckled to and hugged himself, when it somehow leaked out that Clem Freer was not doing so well in London as had been anticipated.

Tom Penrose had given but little thought to Jenny Caerden before her engagement to Clem Freer, and certainly he had not regarded her in the light of a possible wife for himself, until after that event. Even now he had no true love or real tenderness of feeling for her; but he was doggedly resolved to win her from her legitimate lover if, by hook or by crook, it might be possible to do so.

For limping Miller Penrose had always hated handsome, straight-limbed Clem Freer. Perhaps it was that he was jealous of the younger man's superiority over himself, in both good looks and pleasant manners; but, be that as it may, he had detested him from the moment he first set eyes on him.

Jenny had seen a good deal of Mary Seaton since Clem's departure, for erysipelas had resulted from the wound on Will's head, and he had been dangerously ill for many weeks. So Jenny had been pretty constant in her visits to Mrs. Ashdown's

house—running in to enquire after the invalid or to give Mary a little occasional help in domestic matters.

She had no suspicion as to how Will had come by his broken head, and, truth to tell, she had small curiosity on the subject ; but Mary, though already burdened by the many little services required by ailing Mrs. Ashdown, had nursed the wounded man through his long illness, and she had found her numerous duties about as many as she could manage.

Howbeit, the long, busy weeks had brought her some renewal of happiness ; for the love that had wandered away from her seemed, in a measure, to be returning. At any rate, Will was very grateful for all the care she lavished on him, and his eyes began once more to follow her movements with their old, fond regard.

But he was getting about again now, and—a good deal to his own surprise—Jenny's charms seemed to his sobered fancy to have lost something of their fascination—to have less attraction for him than of old. And she—capricious as the wind, and quick to perceive that her influence over him was to be as brief as it had been paramount—soon ceased to exert herself to keep him in her toils. But she did not admit, even to her own heart, that she had ever striven to attract him, and now she told herself, with lofty approval of her own magnanimity, that *she* would never be a stumbling-block in “dear Mary's” path of happiness.

In truth, Jenny had a liking for Mary Seaton—selfish, perhaps, but still a liking. Besides, she meant to be faithful to Clem, she assured herself—dear, handsome Clem, about whom all the maids in the place still raved. And if—if—well, if, after all, things went so against her that she *could* not keep the promise she had given him, as loyally as she had intended, it should be broken only for something better than a home such as Will Ashdown could give his wife—comfortable and cosy though that might be.

During the first month of Clem's absence, his letters had been frequent and full of bright expressions of hope ; but within the past few weeks they had shown a falling off in both number and cheerfulness. He had left Treverdale in July, and now, the first days of October had come—bringing with them unusually damp and chilly weather.

“’Tis very hard on a maid,” sighed Jenny, uttering her old

complaint, as, with an open letter in her hand, she stood beside Mary, in the big bow window of the smithy kitchen. "Clem's kep' me waitin' more'n a week for a letter, an' now 't has come, it doesn't tell no better news than t' last. Un doan't seem to ha' got no reg'ler wark yet, 's far's I can make out; but do you read whaat un ses, Mary—Clem writes so queer like, an' I git puzzled wi' it, a bit."

And as Mary read aloud the long, loving letter, her gentle heart grew sad and sore for the writer. For to her, it was abundantly clear that it had been worded with a forced effort at cheerfulness—abundantly clear that the hopes of a soon-to-be-made fortune which poor Clem had carried with him to London, were very far from being realized.

"You haven't answered it, yet, have you, Jenny?" she asked, as, refolding the letter, she handed it back to her companion.

"No," returned Jenny. "I ha'n't had time to. It only got in, this mornin'."

"I would write nice and bright, if I was you," advised Mary. "I'm afraid Clem isn't very happy, though he tries to seem so. Tell him he's sure to get on, by-and-bye, Jenny, dear, and say you don't mind waiting, though he should be ever so long making his fortune."

"Iss, that 'ud be all very waal for he, Mary, but 't wouldn't be true. I be gitten' sick an' weary to death o' waitin', an' wan thing an' t' other!"

"'Twould be much better to take things cheerfully, Jenny."

"Iss, I dessay 'twould; but Clem's bin gone more'n two months, an' I doan't believe un's saved a sing'l shillin'."

"But two months isn't very long, you know, Jenny. Did you answer the letter before this one?"

"No. I can't abear writin' letters, an' I raelly couldn't think o' a ward to say."

"But you'll write now, won't you? And try and say something nice, there's a dear."

"'Tisn't so easy when you'm i' t' dumps! 'Sides, whaat *can* wan say that's nice?"

"Say just all that's in your heart. Say how full it is of love, and trust, and hope, and you'll soon find plenty to tell about. Law, Jenny, I should have thought you wouldn't have been able to get paper enough to set down all your feelings on!"

"Awh, I dessay I shouldn't if I'd got 'em to set down! But s'pose wan hasn't got no hope, an' trust, an' sech, to tell about—whaat's wan to do, then?"

"That's nonsense, Jenny, and it isn't fair to Clem Freer to talk so. Anyhow, 'tis best to keep one's face to the bright and hopeful side of things as long as one can—'tis time enough to turn to the dark when one must. And Clem will do well, by-an'-bye, be sure of that."

"I doan't b'lieve un 'ull *ever* do waal," sighed Jenny, gazing drearily out at the ducks disporting themselves, with much seeming enjoyment, in the mud of a small pond on the opposite expanse of green. "Us ha' never had a bit o' luck since t' day us was e'gaged, an' sometimes, I wish I'd never seen Clem at all. 'Twould ha' bin better for me—an' he, too, p'r'aps."

"I don't like to hear you say that," spoke Mary, after a pause of pained thought. "There must be something wrong with you, Jenny, to make you talk as you do to-day."

"Ain't it enough to make wan talk so, when there doesn't seem to be no better days i' store for wan?" dashing genuine and unwonted tears from her dark eyes. "'Twouldn't be so very s'prisin' if I sed a lot o' things wan 'ad best keep to wan's self!"

"Jenny, are you sure you still care for Clem Freer?"

"Oh, lors, yes—o' course I do! If 'twasn't for—for thaat——"

"Well?—if it wasn't for 'that,' what would you do?"

"Awh, Mary, whaat's t' use o' askin'?" flushing and laughing, in a sudden change of mood. "How'm I to know whaat I 'ud do?"

"I'm afraid I know, Jenny, and p'r'aps it may be best to speak out plain. But I shouldn't like to hurt your feelings, dear," laying a caressing hand on her blushing friend's shoulder, "and I shouldn't like to offend you; but when I was up at your place, a week or more back, a weight of surprise and fear fell on my heart from something I saw. Shall I tell you what it was?—you won't be vexed?"

"Lors, no—you'm welcome to say aught you like, Mary. I doan't care!"

"Well, then, as we were standing chatting in your porch, Tom Penrose went by, you remember; and I saw him fling you a

wicked look, and a sly kiss from the tips of his fingers. And, oh, Jenny, instead of seeming angry, you gave him such a look back as would have broke Clem Freer's heart if he could have seen it! Ah, why didn't you—why *didn't* you show him that you were offended?"

"Waal, p'r'aps I wasn't!"

"Oh, don't say that! You should have shown the miller that you wouldn't allow anyone to treat you so, but him you're engaged to."

"What a prudish maid you be, to be sure, Mary! Whaat harm is it to gi' a pleasant look here an' there? An' t' miller's rich, too—'twould be stupid t' offend un. T' maid as marries he, 'ull ha' a gran' time o' it!"

"Don't you believe it, Jenny! He may be rich—folks seem to think so; but I've heard it said that he worked and starved his wife to death, in less than a year."

"Iss, I ha' heard it said so, too, but I doan't b'lieve it a bit. 'Sides, I ha' heard tell as her was a pore, weak, plain-faced thing as no wan 'ud care to look at twice, though her *had* got a goodish bit o' money o' her own. Things 'ud ha' bin diff'rent, p'r'aps, if her'd ha' bin young an' han'some."

"I don't think so," said Mary, sighing. "The miller's got 'miser' plain written on his face, and I don't believe he'll ever be kind or liberal to anyone. Now, Clem Freer seems so different. He mayn't ever be really rich; but what he gets he'll share with his wife, and be proud and happy in doing it. But it will never be so with Miller Penrose, take my word for it, Jenny."

"Waal," said Jenny, preparing to depart, "it doesn't matter much to me, whether 'twould or no; an' if I be goin' to try an' write to Clem, to-day, 'tis time I got back to home."

(*To be continued.*)

BELGRAVIA

JULY, 1893.

Found Wanting.*

By MRS. ALEXANDER.

Author of "THE WOOING O'T," "A WOMAN'S HEART," "BLIND FATE,"
"FOR HIS SAKE," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XIV.

"MISS MACALLAN AT HOME."

THIS was not a very attractive or amiable letter, nevertheless May made up her mind at once to accept Miss Euphemia Macallan's offer. Ogilvie's few emphatic words were quite enough for her; still, she would not write in reply until she had spoken to Mrs. Conroy and Frances respecting it.

For an opportunity to do so, she must wait till the following morning; as it happened there was a large dinner-party that evening, and May had begged leave to remain in her own room, as it seemed hardly fit that she should appear at so large a party not quite three months after her father's death.

She quite enjoyed the silence and repose of her lonely evening, and plied her needle while her thoughts wandered away into the future.

This Scotch lady (May supposed she must be Scotch), seemed rather hard, but no doubt she would not make herself very disagreeable to a companion, backed up, as May was, by so powerful a protector as Ogilvie must be. He had evidently planned the engagement for her, and perhaps the formidable Miss Macallan might prove interesting and malleable, on a closer acquaintance.

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At any rate, May reflected, she would be in London, where she would have opportunities of seeing Ogilvie occasionally, if—he did not go to Japan or any other end of the earth! *That* was a possibility she did not like to contemplate! But she must accustom herself to expect it, for, however attached friends might be, they were never linked like—— She arrested her own thought at the words which suggested themselves, and a smile dimpled round her lips, as she remembered Ogilvie's objection to marriage. Indeed one could hardly imagine him a married man. He seemed too much an abstract of intelligence, worldliness, and good breeding, to be amenable to the common laws of ordinary existence—to endure the homely happiness of comfortable married life. Certainly he was very good to his self-imposed ward. There was nothing cold or indifferent in his real kindness, yet his words and manner were calm and serious enough for "a potent, grave and reverend signor," but she felt (why, she could not have said) that there was a curious affinity between them, something in the tone of his voice when he spoke to her, in the touch of his hand, on the rare occasions when he took hers, that communicated a strange, delightful sense that her presence gave him pleasure, that he could talk to her without restraint, that he trusted her unstintingly, and not undeservedly, for she never repeated a syllable he said to her, nor let any eyes save her own rest on what he had written. Yes, whatever Miss Euphemia Macallan might be, however miserable the pittance she offered, she (May) would at least try to live with her, and get on with her, for she felt that such was Ogilvie's wish, and that he would not let the effort be too painful. Occupied with such-like dreams the evening passed rapidly, she heard the carriages drive away, and before she began to undress Frances tapped at her door to say good-night.

"I think you have had the best of it, May! We were rather dull; dinners in the country generally are!"

"I have been very comfortable and contented," returned May. "Frances, are you going out early, to-morrow?"

"No, I am quite tired, and Mrs. Montgomery does not want to go out either."

"Then I want to consult you and Mrs. Conroy about my small affairs."

"Why, what has happened?"

"It is too late to discuss anything now. To-morrow will be quite time enough, and you do look pale and fagged." With a friendly good-night the girls parted.

* * * * *

Next morning was very wet, with occasional gusts of wind, and the only lady visitor (for May was considered one of the family) took her breakfast in her room.

"Come to mother's boudoir, May," exclaimed Frances, as soon as the gentlemen had left the breakfast-room. "May has something wonderful to tell," she added.

"No, nothing wonderful!" said May smiling.

"What is it?" asked Mrs. Conroy, as soon as she settled herself in her favourite chair beside her work-table.

"Please read that," was May's reply, handing her Miss Macallan's letter.

Frances, too, read it, over her mother's shoulder.

"What a disagreeable, cast-iron person she must be!" was Mrs. Conroy's comment, when she finished the epistle.

"And not at all well-bred," added Frances.

"Really, May, my dear, I should not accept the offer," continued her mother. "You may as well stay on here."

"But, Mrs. Conroy, though you are so very good, and make me so happy, I cannot continue living on your bounty, on charity—for it is charity, when you do nothing to earn what is given, even as generously as you give. I shall be in the way at some time or other, for instance when you go from home on a visit! It is so difficult too for a girl who, like myself, has no particular requirements or accomplishments to find employment, that it would be very unwise of me to refuse this offer."

"Perhaps so," said Mrs. Conroy reluctantly; "of course your principle is right, May."

"Then," urged May, "this lady's proposition that we should try each other is very fair, and above all, Mr. Ogilvie, in a few lines which I had last night, advised me to accept. So, dearest Mrs. Conroy, I have quite made up my mind to try life with Miss Macallan."

"Then there is no more to be said," replied Mrs. Conroy, who was re-reading the letter, "but I must say this does not give me the idea of a person who is easy to live with."

"I hope she will let you come to see us sometimes!" ex-

claimed Frances. "I hope we shall be in Town after Easter, and see you often. Ah! here is my father."

"Well, what are you in conclave about?" asked Mr. Conroy coming in as she spoke.

"May wants to go and seek her fortune," said Mrs. Conroy, smiling and handing him the letter.

"Gad!" he cried when he had read it. "This is a regular go-to-meeting old cat! Don't go near her, May! She'll put you on half-rations, and you are only beginning to get into condition as it is; she'll ring a curfew at eight or nine o'clock, and put out fire and light, and get the last farthing's worth of work out of you! Stay where you are, till you find something with a sunnier aspect than this skin-and-bone employer."

A brisk discussion ensued, but May was not to be turned from her purpose, and even Mrs. Conroy admitted that it would not perhaps be wise to refuse what Ogilvie had taken the trouble to find for her.

"Well, well!" cried Mr. Conroy. "You may try it. She can hardly manage to starve you to death in a fortnight or three weeks, for if you don't think it will suit, you need not stay the whole month out! Just come back to The Chase, and we'll find a corner for you. Now, 'Madame'—as he generally called his wife—"I want you in the study for another consultation."

So the council broke up, and May remained unmoved.

Writing a proper reply was not a difficult task, and then she had the pleasure of inditing a letter to Ogilvie, apologising for troubling him with the one which had crossed his, thanking him for all his kind thoughtfulness on her behalf, and assuring him she would do her utmost to please his kinswoman; then she paused, longing to ask: "Is it true that you are going all that weary way to Japan?" but she held her hand. It would be too great a liberty to question him as to his plans or intentions. Were she face to face with him, she might mention having heard Mrs. Montgomery say so, but she must not write it, it would be presuming on his goodness and indulgence.

Ogilvie answered her letter promptly. Life with Miss Macallan would be, he feared, somewhat dull, and at first she might not seem attractive, but she was less formidable than she looked, and a curious mixture of habitual stinginess with occasional fits of generosity.

"It is, however," he continued, "the beginning of independent life for you, and better things may come. At least, you may be sure of consideration and politeness, as my ward, and I hope to see you from time to time.

"I wish I were to be in London, to introduce you personally to my cousin, but I leave for Marseilles to-morrow, and fear I shall not return until the second week of October."

May was quite content. It would be delightful to see her guardian, as she considered him, now and then; she could expect no more. At any rate, if the seas did not roll between them, she could always turn to him in any time of trouble.

Still, it would be a wrench to part with her kind friends at the Chase—especially Mrs. Conroy—whom she found more really companionable than Frances. If Miss Macallan were only like Mrs. Conroy, she could live with her for ever, and feel like a daughter to her employer.

The beginning of September was wet and stormy, the succession of guests for shooting ceased, and Mrs. Conroy began to long for the softer climate of Cornwall.

"It will soon be here—I mean the twenty-fifth," said May, one wild afternoon, as they sat round the tea-table in Mrs. Conroy's favourite drawing-room, where a cheerful wood fire was blazing.

The Squire had ridden away to Kingsford in defiance of the weather.

"Is your courage oozing away as the hour of trial approaches?" asked Mrs. Conroy, smiling; May had evidently spoken out of her thoughts.

"I am afraid it is, Mrs. Conroy," she returned. "I have hitherto been so fortunate in the kindness and sympathy of my friends, that the idea of a plunge into cold water, such as I cannot help fancying awaits me, is a little shuddery."

"Well, you must remember it is only experimental, you must not martyrise yourself even to please Mr. Ogilvie!"

"I am sure he would not expect you to do so," said Frances, who was slowly stirring her tea in a thoughtful manner.

"Is he in London?" asked Mrs. Conroy.

"I think not! He told me to write to the club if I wanted anything, but that was nearly three weeks ago, and I have had nothing to write about since," and May sighed.

In truth, this break in their correspondence made her courage sink to zero.

"Quite wise of you, dear," returned Mrs. Conroy, "never trouble a man with unnecessary letters; they are easily bored."

"I wish I had some work to do—or work I could do, in Paris, and could live with Madame Falk! She is always so busy and so bright, and we are so accustomed to each other!" resumed May.

"This new acquaintance may prove much better than you expect, May," said Mrs. Conroy. "Now I have been arranging things in my own mind. Suppose, Frances, that we all start together on the 25th or 26th, and as we must stay two or three days in London to shop, May, who must want winter things, shall stay with us, and we'll do all our business together. Write to Miss Macallan, May, and ask her to let you postpone your arrival till the 30th, that will be time enough, and we'll see you safe into the lion's den."

"Dear Mrs. Conroy! how good you are!" cried May, the colour coming to her cheeks, the moisture to her eyes. "It is indeed a kind thought, but I do not want to shop. Madame Falk promised to have my last winter's cloak dyed, and——"

"My dear child! permit me to judge for you! You are going to be independent, if working for a pittance can be called independence; allow me to enable you to start fair. I have a commission on that score from Mr. Conroy, who is, I assure you, quite concerned at your leaving us."

"Yes, May, you must do as mother wishes," added Frances, "and when we are in Town I will take you to see the Geological Museum. I always regret your indifference to that most interesting science."

So after a few grateful, agitated words, for she felt it hard to express all she felt to these good friends, May retired to write, as Mrs. Conroy wished, to Miss Euphemia Macallan.

That lady replied by return that Miss Riddell's suggestion suited her very well, as one of her servants wanted a holiday, and would therefore be absent until the 29th, and it was as well that the visitor should not arrive till the following day.

* * * * *

It greatly softened the regret May felt at leaving the charming house where she had been so kindly sheltered, to have the

friendly owners for her companions, at any rate for the first stage of her journey into the unknown.

Mr. Conroy, with his usual care for his women-kind, escorted them to Town, and remained to see his wife and daughter safely started on their journey south-west before returning to the Chase.

To May, the days spent in a grand West-end hôtel were more bewildering than pleasurable.

She was almost frightened at the sums expended by Frances and her mother in what they considered necessities for the winter, and had great difficulty in persuading Mrs. Conroy to let her choose sufficiently simple and inexpensive things for herself.

At last the dreary day came when she must part from all she had ever known, and plunge into an entirely new world.

It was a bright, crisp day, and Mrs. Conroy observed pleasantly, that she was glad to see that the sun shone upon her young friend's enterprise.

May could hardly smile.

She had sent Ogilvie a few lines to announce her slight change of plan to which note he had not replied. Was he—now that he had fulfilled his promise of finding occupation for her—was he going to relax in his care for her? She would not think of anything so dreadful—so annihilating! But her kind companion noticed that she looked white, and that her lips quivered, and reproached her for her lack of courage.

Granby Road was an old-fashioned street, leading south from Kensington Gore; on the east side were solid, red-brick houses, with tall, narrow windows, and big knockers on the hall doors, also wide entrances and stairways. Opposite, were much more modern, semi-detached villas, of the perky, pretentious order, with gardens in front, some of them well-kept, and others not—for the place was going down—the lower end was already in the hands of the destroyer, and about to be merged into "Mansions" not "in the skies," but next door to them, in fashionable altitude, *i.e.*, South Kensington.

"It seems rather a dull situation," said Mrs. Conroy, as the carriage stopped opposite an evidently well cared for abode, with delicately clean muslin curtains, resplendent brasses, wherever brasses ought to be, and beautifully whitened door-steps.

The door was thrown open by a neat damsel in a large muslin

cap and a dandified white apron. Miss Macallan was at home, Mrs. Conroy and May descended and were shown into a rather dingy but spacious dining-room, covered with a worn Turkey carpet, and furnished with a row of very solid, leather-covered, chairs ranged against the wall, an "uneasy" arm chair at either side of the black fire-place, a knee-hole table in the window, a big funereal sideboard of dark mahogany opposite, and a large dining-table in the middle.

From one of the uneasy chairs, as they entered, up rose a tall, angular figure, clad in a silk garment of shot green and crimson, surmounted by a tall head, a pasty, freckled face with high cheek bones, pale grey, stern eyes, a rather grim mouth with an obstinate-looking long upper lip and a bony chin ; these were enclosed within a stiff, reddish-grey sausage-like curl at either side, each kept in its place by a monstrosity called a side comb, above which a white lace cap with pendant lappets completed the toilette.

As she stood silent for a moment, Mrs. Conroy began in her gentle, well-bred tones : " I have taken the liberty of accompanying my young friend, Miss Riddell, to see her safe into your hands."

" I'm sure you are varra guid," returned Miss Macallan, with a mechanical widening of the lips intended for a gracious smile. " I've been expecting you this hour past."

" I am sorry to be late," said May falteringly.

" It is of no consequence," returned Miss Macallan, with a wave of the hand. " I am glad to see the young leddy. Indeed, any friend of my kinsman Ogilvie is welcome to me."

" Thank you, very much !" said May, somewhat comforted.

" And pray have I the pleeshure of speaking to Mrs. Conroy ?" continued Miss Macallan, whose broad Scotch we shall in future leave to the reader's imagination.

" I *am* Mrs. Conroy, and beg to thank you for your courtesy in leaving Miss Riddell with us for a few days longer. We too have the pleasure of knowing Mr. Ogilvie, and I hope when we return to town to call upon you, if you will permit me."

" Certainly ! I shall be extremely glad to make your acquaintance." A few more civil speeches and Mrs. Conroy took her leave.

May clung to her a little in the hall, and kissed her cheek with unusual demonstrativeness.

"Don't worry yourself, my love," whispered the good-natured matron. "I think she intends to be very civil, and that means a good deal; write soon, and tell Frances *every* thing. Good-bye, my dear child." Another moment and the carriage rolled away and May, feeling more utterly desolate than she ever did before, while she kept back her tears by a desperate effort, returned to the solemn dining-room.

"Ah, well, come and sit you down a bit," began Miss Macallan, "it will soon be time to light the gas and then Rebecca will show you your room. I'd go myself, only I am a sufferer from rheumatism, and these bright crisp days it is just more than I can manage to go up and down stairs more than once a day. You have the room next to mine; it's a nice comfortable apartment and if I should want you in the night—quite convenient."

"Thank you!" returned May, a little at a loss how to reply. "Of course you must not think of toiling upstairs with me."

"You are in very deep black," resumed the hostess. "I suppose your father is not that long dead?"

"Not more than three months," said May, sadly.

"Eh! that hasn't given you much time to get accustomed to the lone business, and my cousin Ogilvie will have been his nearest friend, since he left you to his care?"

"They were a great deal together, and Mr. Ogilvie has been wonderfully good to me. I can never be grateful enough to him."

"He was always weel intentioned," remarked Miss Macallan meditatively, "though whiles he had a hard way with him."

"I thought so too, when I met him first," said May—

"Eh?" cried Miss Macallan keenly, her head a little on one side like an incarnate note of interrogation. "Then you did not know him when you were a bairn?"

"No," returned May, suddenly put on her guard by her interlocutor's tone, "only since I grew up."

"May be you come from the north countrie yourself—Riddell is a good old Border name?"

"My father was quite English, though I have heard him say his people originally came from Scotland, but I know no relations, as I have lived chiefly in Paris."

"Well, all things are mixed with mercy!" said Miss Macallan solemnly. "It's a blessing my kinsman took you out of the place before they made a Papist of you."

"I assure you, no one ever tried. The people I lived amongst were not inclined to convert their neighbours."

"Which does not speak very well for their religious convictions," returned Miss Macallan sternly. "Those who have been blest with a knowledge of the Truth, ought to be ready enough to speak a word in season."

May preferred to accept this species of rebuke in silence.

"I suppose then," resumed Miss Macallan in more cheerful tones, "Mr. Ogilvie manages everything for you—your money matters and all?"

"Exactly, and I am glad to think that he has not a difficult task," returned May smiling. She meant that as far as money went, there was nothing to manage, Her hostess however construed her words differently.

"Eh! it's something to be thankful for when a man leaves what belongs to him of this world's goods clear and straight instead of all through other! And so you wish to live in London, eh?"

May began to weary of this cross-examination—moreover, though he had never enjoined reticence upon her in so many words, she felt that Ogilvie did not wish her to be outspoken so she made an attempt to release herself.

"I only wish to live where I can do something to earn my own bread, Miss Macallan, and I hope you will find me of some use. Now if you will allow me, I should like to go to my own room and unpack my things before dinner."

"You seem a wise-like young lady," returned Miss Macallan, "and I'll ring for Jessie—but I hope you are not too much accustomed to fine ways, and late dinners. I have just a chop or a slice of cold ham to my tea. It's less costly, and more wholesome, so I hope you won't mind."

"Me? Oh, no. I have just come from rather a grand house, it is true, but my own home was homely enough!"

"I am glad to hear you say so—for I am a homely person myself—and there's no doubt you are the sort of girlie I wanted."

Here a sort of replica of Miss Macallan herself—only a little taller, a little gaunter, a little greyer, and crowned by a muslin cap with a goffered border, entered the room, saying in a rather high-pitched voice:

"Did you ring, mem?"

May could hardly believe that anything so antiquated and rigid could answer to the soft, youthful name of Jessie.

"You'll just take the young lady up to her room, Jessie, and undo her trunk for her. You'll show her the chest of drawers and hanging press."

"I couldn't just very well empty the wardrobe and big chest of drawers now, but——

"Oh, I daresay I shall have quite room enough," cried May, "I have very little to put away," and she followed Jessie upstairs, leaving Miss Macallan in a brown study. What object could her "Cousin Ogilvie have in befriending a young, penniless girl, who wanted to earn her bread? He, whom she had always respected as a "hard man"? Not but what he had always kept up with her. She was his mother's cousin, and had been very friendly with the late Mrs. Ogilvie, who married above her own station. In truth, Ogilvie had been very fond of his mother, and Miss Macallan had been more with her than any other friend or relative. The shrewd Euphemia was very proud of her successful kinsman, who had a very curious amount of influence over her. And she devoted a good many half-hours when "it was just waste" to light up yet a while, or while she was jolting in an omnibus to Stagg & Mantle's on a remnant day, to the consideration of what possible motive could actuate Ogilvie. At last her imagination settled a delightful succession of cause and effect. That "cunning chiel," Ogilvie, had some private knowledge respecting Miss Riddell's right to some large fortune, at present seeking an owner, and so soon as he had made her his own he would prosecute her claims, and in Ogilvie's hands, with his opportunities, a large fortune would soon become colossal. It was a beautiful vision of love and money, quite captivating to her imagination, and the Scotch imagination is a good stout, serviceable article, capable of stretching to a large extent. It was many a day since such a romantic possibility presented itself to the mental ken of Euphemia Macallan.

"And I'll give her no chance of saying I didn't treat her well, and give her of the best," was the distinct resolution which closed this spell of reflection, or rather this piecing together of possibilities and probabilities.

"Is that you, Jessie?" hearing a quiet, measured tread in the hall.

"Yes, mem."

"Come here, Jessie."

Jessie obeyed.

"And is the young lady satisfied with her room?"

"She didna say to the contrary, mem."

"She did not look as if she wanted a fire?"

"A fire!" in a piercing tone of astonishment, "and we not yet intil October? What for should she want a fire?"

"Well, Jessie, she's a young lady who has been accustomed to every comfort, and will again, no doubt, and Mr. Ogilvie would be sore vexed if we let her want for anything."

"Eh, mem! she seemed well content. Indeed, she is a pleasant young leddy and speaks verra soft and kind. She noticed the grand big bed—it's more than she is accustomed to, I'm thinking, for she laughed and said 'I shall not be able to find myself in so large a bed as that to-morrow morning.'"

"Yes," returned Miss Macallan with justifiable pride, "it is a handsome bedstead, and what's more, there's a real down bed on it. Now Jessie, my woman, just make us some cream scones for our tea. It will be a treat for an English lassie, only, as it is not a company night, make them *without* the cream, Jessie—she does not know—she'll never miss it."

"Varra well, mem," said Jessie, and departed kitchenwards.

Altogether May felt less wretched than she expected to be, when she descended on hearing a gong making as much noise as if it announced a banquet instead of high tea. Miss Macallan was something quite new to her—her quaintness amused May immensely, and her hostess's evident anxiety to be civil and conciliatory convinced her that her good friend and guardian had insisted on her being well treated.

The sepulchral dining-room looked a little more cheerful when the gas was lit and the table spread, and Jessie's cream scones (the cream omitted by "particular desire") were excellent, in spite of the omission.

Miss Macallan was a continuous talker, and during the evening meal kept up a constant stream of questions respecting the domestic arrangements at Audeley Chase—the habits and customs of the proprietors, and the probable cost of the establishment.

Tea over, May, anxious to be up and doing, offered to begin her duties by reading aloud.

"You'll be too tired!" said Miss Macallan, "and I have nothing in the house but last week's *Scotsman*."

"Have you no especial book on hand now?"

"No. I have read all that are in the house, except the Rev. Angus McCrae's new volume of sermons, and I am no very pleased about it."

"Are they not well written?" asked May, trying to seem interested.

"You see, this is what I didn't like—soon after they came out, and there was a talk about them, he said one day I met him in the Hammersmith omnibus, 'Would you like to have a copy, Miss Macallan?' says he. 'I should, indeed,' says I, quite flattered, though I have rented sittings in the Kensington Free Kirk of Scotland, close by here, these fifteen years, and it was no great return for the outlay, any way. The next morning the book came, and I'm no saying it isn't a handsome book, solid and *soond*, but the day after, when I had cut half the leaves, came an account, five and saxpence! What *do* you think of that?"

"The gentleman ought to have told you it was not a gift," said May, smiling.

"Just so. Wouldn't *you* have thought it was in a present?"

"Certainly."

Here a loud ring turned the current of Miss Macallan's thoughts.

"That will be the post. I'm thinking a letter for you. I don't spend much time inditing letters."

"I wonder"—began May, knowing that Madame Falk had not her present address, when the young rosy-cheeked servant entered and presented May with a letter from Ogilvie. She felt her heart beat with sudden pleasure, but she did her best (and successfully) to keep an unmoved face.

"It is from Mr. Ogilvie," she said quietly. "He is so very kind as to send me a few lines to wish me success in pleasing *you*." And she looked up with a pleasant smile. "He says little more, except that he hopes to be in London soon, and to call on you, to whom he desires his best regards."

"Oh, indeed. I am much obleeged. Does he say where he is staying?"

"At Marseilles."

"Doesn't he give his address?"

"No. I don't often write. I do not like to trouble him more than I can help."

"Quite right. The post is late. Now, it's my habit to read a portion of Scripture, and ask a blessing on the Word, so it will be quite ten before we are in bed. Will you be so kind as to ring the bell?"

CHAPTER XV.

"OGILVIE RETURNS."

HAVING listened to a portion of Scripture, describing the satisfactory destruction of hostile tribes by the "chosen people," and a prayer to correspond, May wished Miss Macallan good-night, and took an old-fashioned silver candlestick, containing a rather greasy candle, from the hand of Jessie, the dim light of which made darkness barely visible as she ascended the dreary stairs. Her room too looked eerie, and the large four-post bed, the like of which she had never seen before, seemed positively fearsome. It was even a comfort to think Miss Macallan was next door to her, though May reflected that Miss Macallan in a night-cap—and the probability that she wore one was strong—would be an awe-inspiring spectacle.

The room too was curiously bare and bleak, though well-furnished in all essentials. Though the weather was not really cold, the aspect of the dim, desperately clean, apartment struck a chill through her veins, her hands trembled but she could not feel quite dismayed. Having locked her door, and wrapped herself in a warm shawl, she took out her letter to revive herself.

"MY DEAR MAY," it began, "you were quite right to wait and travel with Mrs. and Miss Conroy; a day or two sooner or later was of no importance to my rather remarkable relative. You must tell me your first impressions of her, when we meet. I trust she makes you comfortable—on this head, you must tell me the truth; send me a line to the club as usual. Do you think Mrs. Conroy will be able to winter in England? I hope to return soon, but the length of my stay in this detestable place

depends on the powers that be. Let me warn you that Miss Macallan is cursed with the wildest curiosity respecting everything which does not concern her, so don't let her pump you. I do not suppose she would read your letters, but 'lead her not into temptation,' at any rate burn mine!

"I must stop, for I want this to greet you on your start in life on your own account. May success attend you, and may brighter days soon be yours. When I return I hope to show you something of London. Believe me, my dear ward, to be always your friend,

"PIERS OGILVIE."

This was dated Marseilles. May read it through twice, a half smile of pleasure on her lips. Then she tore it into small pieces and burned them in the candle, throwing the ashes out of the window.

With that variability of temperature to which the inhabitants of this "Isle of Beauty" are accustomed, the "morrow" in May's new abode was dull, with a cold, drizzling rain, and occasional gusts of wind from various points of the compass. The dining-room, when May descended in time for prayers at half-past eight sharp, looked cheerless and depressing, for it was not yet the date at which Miss Macallan permitted fires to be lighted, but the cardboard folding screen, on which were depicted roses, dahlias and chrysanthemums, had been removed from the cold grate where the coals and wood were laid, and which looked black indeed.

Miss Macallan had already taken her place at table, and where her plate ought to have been a thick, black bible was placed.

"You'll sit here, please," she said to May, indicating one of the chairs against the wall.

Jessie, and her young assistant, entering at the same time, placed themselves as near the door as they could squeeze, and the lady of the house proceeded to read a passage from the Revelations. It was shorter than the evening portion, so was the prayer, and the "Amen" was so immediately followed by the words, "Here, Agatha, infuse the tea as quick as you can and be sure the water boils!" that for half a second May thought it was part of the petition. Then, having given a pinch of tea in a large cup to the rosy-cheeked girl, she turned to her young guest.

"Good morning, Miss Riddell, I hope you rested well—was your bed comfortable?"

"It was only too luxurious, Miss Macallan! I had some difficulty in leaving it!"

"Eh! It's not every night you'll sleep in a bed like that! Do you find the room chill? I did not think it worth while setting the fire alight. The sun will be out presently, when the shower has passed, and this room is awful warm in the morning sun."

"Just at present it does not look as if we should ever see the sun again," said May smiling.

"It's a verra changeable climate," returned Miss Macallan seriously, "but if you feel cold, I'll tell Agatha to light the fire."

"Oh, not on my account!" exclaimed May. "Tea will make me quite warm,"

"Maybe so! Here's breakfast," as the younger servant brought in a tray.

May was glad to have a cup of hot tea, and Miss Macallan helped her to two of the four scraps of bacon which lay on an elegant silver breakfast-dish.

"The day after to-morrow," resumed Miss Macallan, when she had finished her bacon, and broken some toast into her tea-cup, "the day after to-morrow I mean to begin fires in the drawing-room; but as it's a year past since the grate was used, I think it is well the vent was seen to first. Then you can use the room every morning and afternoon if you want to play music or anything else."

"You are really too good!" said May, surprised at this consideration. "You must not inconvenience yourself, but if you *can* let me have time to practise I shall be very grateful! I am so glad you have a piano."

"Ah, well, I can't say I have one in the house yet, but my cousin Ogilvie said you would need one, and insisted strongly on my hiring one, so I gave in on that point, but I thought it better you should choose it yourself. There is a verra respectable man lets pianos in the High Street, so if it clears we'll go this afternoon, and you can please yourself."

"Thank you very much, Miss Macallan! Do you like music?"

"Well, yes, I am pleased to hear a Scotch tunc, or a hymn, but

music never came much in my way. Anyhow, my cousin Ogilvie seems to think it right you should have a pianoforte to play upon and I must keep my word! Will you take another cup of tea? No? Then I'll be obleeged to you to ring the bell. I don't like the breakfast things longer about than need be—it's just a waste of time."

May complied.

"I should be very glad, Miss Macallan, if you would tell me what you wish me to do," she said. "I have never been out of my own home before, and I do not exactly know my duties."

Miss Macallan's mouth extended itself into a grim smile.

"You'll not be accustomed to do much, I'm thinking," she said.

"You are mistaken, I assure you! I have been in the habit of doing a great many things, perhaps not very well, but as well as I could, and I want to be really of use to you."

"Maybe you'll say what you *can* do?" asked Miss Macallan dryly.

May laughed and coloured as she returned:

"I can read aloud, and write to dictation, I have done a deal of needlework, and I believe I darn pretty well. I could buy things in France, that is, I know the prices, and I have some idea of arithmetic, not much, for my father was a very good arithmetician, and kept his books, oh, beautifully!"

"From what I can gather your late father must have been a sensible, far-seeing man," observed Miss Macallan, solemnly.

"He was very clever," returned May, with a far-away look, while she asked herself "Am I not unnaturally hard not to feel more sorrow for him?"

"You spoke of darning," resumed Miss Macallan, "I have some napery I set great store by, and they are wearing a bit in the folds, do you feel equal to darning linen?"

"I think I could, and at all events I shall take great pains."

"Verra well! I'll give you a tray cloth just to try your hand. I'm fond of needlework myself, but for fine darning my eyes are not just what they were."

"That must be trying," said May. "Knitting is very nice when you cannot see well."

"Ay, I knit a good deal."

"And I could read to you. Perhaps you or your cook would

tell me about prices and quantities here, and I might market for you."

"You are a well-disposed girlic," with grave approval. "But I do not think you would be much good at buying, after an up-bringing among careless extravagant foreigners."

"But, Miss Macallan! if you had lived in France, you would find how wonderfully thrifty French people are. I have heard an English lady, who knew both French and English, say that a French family would live well on what is thrown away in an English kitchen."

"Well! that's something new! Anyway they would not manage to live on what's thrown away in a Scotch one. No, my dear, you must leave the marketing to Jessie and me. I told them at the stationer's by the corner to send me the *Telegraph* every day. Now I have a young lady to read the paper, I must have a paper to read. Now, come away and I'll show you the house—and I think you'll say it is well kept."

Miss Macallan rose up, seeming to May taller than ever, and, led the way to the topmost attics, into cupboards and closets—especially the linen closet. Every room was well and suitably furnished with the most solid edifices, wardrobes and bedsteads in mahogany and walnut—the beauty and merit of which was duly pointed out—the coverlets of the beds were carefully lifted at the sides to show the cleanliness and high preservation of the mattresses, the curtains were held out to show how well they had been kept from light and dust, though ten, twelve or fifteen years, as the case might be, in use. The drawing-room, which was the grandest part of the show, made May shiver so utterly was it denuded of all small objects of use or ornament. A large room with three tall narrow windows, innocent of balconies shaded by brocaded stuff curtains (white flowers on a yellow ground) a huge looking-glass set in a deep gold frame, meandering into illogical scrolls and curves at the top, more than half covered the end of the room, and before it, its natural accompaniment, a marble console table on which stood a big china vase of unaccountable shape, the unmistakable ugliness of the Regency period stamped upon it; then there were chairs and tables—the former shrouded in much-washed brown holland, and strips of looking-glass between the windows, with another huge one over the mantelpiece, on which was an ormolu clock, two more vases

and a Dresden shepherd and shepherdess, a fairly good cabinet inlaid, with ornamental shelves opposite the windows, and dwarf book-cases at either side of the fireplace, filled with the dreariest books, sermons, theological works, Thompson's "Seasons," Hume's "History of England," and to enliven them, the works of Robert Burns.

"It's a fine room!" ejaculated Miss Macallan looking round with pride. "My late brother worked hard to plenish it, and to gather the property that kept the house and"—in a sort of pious, elevated tone—"I thank the gude Lord that I have been enabled to keep it well nigh as fresh and sound as he left it, nigh twelve years. Eh! Andrew, my man, if you were to walk in this minute, you'd not find a pin's point changed, and scarce even reasonable wear and tear. Eh! my word! but he had a short spell of his grand new house, my poor brother," and she put her handkerchief to her eyes.

May was half amused and partly touched by this curious proof of devotion to a beloved brother.

"It must have been a terrible loss to you—his death!" she said softly.

"You may well say so, and it's a large fortune he would have been master of if the Lord had spared him," said Miss Macallan as she pulled down the blinds she had drawn up that May might see all the glories of the drawing-room. Then she led the way to the kitchen, the pantry, even the coal cellar, and everywhere extreme order and cleanliness pervaded the premises.

"I haven't gone up and down stairs like this since the spring cleaning," said Miss Macallan, subsiding into her uneasy "easy-chair," when they returned to the dining-room. "Miss Riddell my dear! will you bring me my work-bag. It hangs on a nail at the other side of the fireplace—thank you! I am just doing a dozen pair of grey woollen socks for a foolish-like thing they call a 'Christmas Tree.' Our minister is a verra active man, indeed I might say restless, restless as if he had 'a bee in his bonnet,' and he is always devising something to pick the pockets of his congregation—so I do a bit on and off for my contribution, it does not cost so much in the end. Now, suppose you read me a bit of the paper, it's there on the sideboard?"

May willingly complied. She was beginning to feel puzzled about her employer. Surely Miss Macallan did not know what

she wanted, when she entertained the idea of having a companion. She seemed quite sufficient to herself, to help herself! It would be difficult to discover how one could be of use to such a woman! Existence in her house threatened to be the very lowest, *i. e.* the least human, form of life May had ever known or imagined. Still she did not want to be dismissed, and though Miss Euphemia Macallan was far from a congenial spirit, she was at least quite free from the airs of command, and the dictatorial tone which May had dreaded, judging by her letter.

For the present however, she put these things out of her head, and addressed herself to read.

"Where shall I begin?"

"Well—I don't exactly know! Eh! just read over the price list—the stocks and shares, you know."

"I do *not* know, Miss Macallan, I am sorry to say! Whereabouts shall I find it, and what sort of a list is it? New Publications?"

"Gude preserve us! Where were ye reared? I didn't think there was such ignorance in these days. This comes of living among foreigners! Give me the paper."

"I am afraid I am very ignorant of many things."

"Ay! there it is! cried Miss Macallan, after turning over the paper two or three times. "I can find it quicker in the *Scotsman*, but there it is sure enough," and she returned it to May. "You just remind me to explain what it all means—some day. It is right down dreadful to leave a young creature ignorant of anything so important as investments! Just you read that, beginning at the beginning."

May dutifully complied and soon stopped at "Egyptian"?

"Is it Egyptian Unified?"

"Yes, I think so?"

"Well, what's that?"

"The figures opposite are $73\frac{3}{4}$ to 74!"

"Ay! they are going up. Now look for Indian Three per Cents.—but there! give it to me, I'll take my glasses!" cried Miss Macallan. "I'll explain it all to you another time! Just now I cannot be fashed!" She took the paper hastily, and putting her spectacles on her long straight nose, began to skim the prices half aloud with a sort of humming commentary, in an undertone: "Ah! Indian Three per Cents. gone down one-sixteen

—that's curious! why should they now? Consuls 98, ex. div. not so bad. Bulgarian, how anyone can risk their money on them! Chilian?—pooh, rubbish! Railway stock. Debenture bonds—no such luck as to have any—Market firm at close. Well, we are not going to smash just yet!”

May listened with some surprise to this unknown tongue, as it was to her.

“Now,” said Miss Macallan, returning the paper to her, “you ask me this evening, or some time when I am not much occupied, to explain to you about stocks and shares, and I'll give you a lesson, which I hope you won't soon forget. It's a varra interesting, not to say, important, subject, and I am amazed to think how it came to be omitted from anything that is called education.”

“I shall be very pleased if you will take the trouble to complete mine in that direction,” returned May, with a smile.

“And that I will”—pleasantly—“I am glad to help a young creature that isn't upsetting and conceited. It's not your fault if your education was neglected; now just look through the paper, and see if there's a remarkable murder, or a divorce case—one must have a little amusement, besides the more important matters.”

May searched the columns, but only saw a paragraph in which were the bare fact of an intelligent workman having in an unpremeditated manner kicked his wife to death, and the decision of the judge in the Divorce court respecting the costs in a cause already tried.

“The paper is rather dull to-day,” remarked Miss Macallan, who was knitting energetically, “I canna say it's worth a bawbee.”

“There seems to be a very interesting criticism here, on a new play at the Lyceum Theatre; shall I read it?”

“No!” an intensely negative no. “The inside of a playhouse I have never seen, and never will! I was brought up by God-fearing parents, that never touched cards, nor looked at play-actors, nor neglected the Sawbbath! and I'm not going to do differently.”

“I suppose not!” returned May soothingly, a little startled by this solemn outbreak, “but are there really people now-a-days—I mean, ordinary people——” she hesitated, fearing to offend, “who think theatres and cards wrong—that is sinful?”

"Not many, I am sorry to say! Godliness and thought² for what is lawful and improving, are fast dying out. I suppose now you have been often at the play?"

"Oh, yes! often."

"Yet you seem a well-disposed, wise-like girlie! Did you not feel dazed and, in a way, conscience stricken, when you had been spending your precious time, looking at a parcel of bedizened, painted jawpies, repeating lies and nonsense half the night?"

"Indeed, I did not!" said May, resisting, with some difficulty, her inclination to laugh. "I felt very glad I had enjoyed myself, for I must confess I love going to the theatre."

Miss Macallan groaned.

"You shall come and hear the Rev. Angus McCrae on the subject of the devil's devices! I don't think I'll trouble you for any more of that paper—I'll just step upstairs and find you a bit of darning to while away the time till dinner. Then, if it clears we will go and see about the pianoforte. I don't want you to write to my cousin Ogilvie, before it is in the house. I like to keep my word, and I want him to know it, so mind you tell him when you write, and"—with a sudden sharp look—"when will that be?"

"Not for two or three days."

"That's right; men hate to be fashed for nothing."

This rather wearisome day was a tolerable sample of many which succeeded it. May felt that, on the whole, she found favour in her employer's eyes, and she certainly had a good deal of time to herself, rather too much for the satisfaction of her somewhat tender conscience. She wanted to do more for her salary, whatever it was to be. This being left as yet unsettled May supposed, till the end of her month of trial.

But it was terribly wearisome, this sort of starved life. Never before had she been without books, never without intelligent and even cultivated society. The newspaper and the piano, and her correspondence with Frances Conroy and Madame Falk, were her chief employment and consolation.

Miss Macallan was an untiring pedestrian, and quite outwalked her young companion.

She thought nothing of a march straight to Piccadilly Circus; an hour's perambulation of the Junior Army and Navy Stores, then a ramble up Regent Street, to buy two or three yards of

trimming at Peter Robinson's, wherewith to repair a table-cover or a garment (she never seemed to get anything new), then perhaps what she termed "a pennyworth of bus" to the Marble Arch, and a walk home across the Park. When she found May too tired to speak after such an expedition, she held forth on the superiority of old-fashioned up-bringing as compared to the "effeeminaency" of modern training!

Still May felt that she was treated with unusual consideration—only—she did not know how long she should be able to endure such a routine.

The last week of October was now on them, and a wild, wet, stormy week it was, playing havoc with the many-tinted leaves in Kensington Gardens, where it was always a treat to May to wander alone.

This particular Thursday, Miss Macallan had gone to the City on some particular business, starting the moment dinner was over, so May, who had reduced her slender and rapidly diminishing store of money, by the purchase of a new song, retired to the drawing-room, intending to have a really good practice.

She was quite absorbed in her occupation, and did not even hear the door open, when she became aware that Jessie was at her elbow, and speaking.

"Here's Mr. Ogilvie himself, and Miss Macallan's no at hame!"

May started up, and saw her guardian on the threshold. Everything seemed absorbed in that delightful sight.

"Oh, how glad I am to see you! I did not dare to hope you would come so soon!" she exclaimed, hastening to meet him with outstretched hands.

He took and held them for a moment, looking into her eyes with an earnest, questioning glance, while his dark face lit up with an expression of pleasure.

"You are quite well, May? I need scarcely ask. You look a different creature from—"

'The girl I left behind me!'

and he continued to gaze at her searchingly. Then he looked quickly round the room, at the piano, the fire, a few chrysanthemums in a glass on the table, before he let her go.

"My dear cousin is out, I am told, and will I hope, stay out. Come May, tell me everything while we are alone together." He said the last words low and softly as if they gave him pleasure.

"Yes, how delighted I am to have such a chance," returned May, a tinge of pink warming her cheek, and deepening the colour in her eyes. "Here, this is a tolerable chair," drawing one near the fire, with a joyous air.

"Am I an old fogey to be taken care of?" asked Ogilvie with his rare sweet smile.

"No! but a good kind friend who ought to be taken care of."

Ogilvie sat down and May took a low child's chair which had made its way by some accident into the sacred room, at the opposite side of the fire. There was a moment's silence.

"Now, my dear ward, begin at the beginning, and tell me everything," asked Ogilvie.

"I have not very much to tell, though it seems such far-away ages since I saw you. Time has gone very slowly," and May proceeded to describe her stay at Audeley Chase, and then the doubt and dread with which she parted with Mrs. Conroy and Frances, to dare the terrors of her new life with Miss Macallan.

"Well, and Miss Macallan? you find the house rather ghostly, do you not? Look at me, May?"

"You need not be afraid. I shall tell you the whole truth," she returned with a low happy laugh. "The house was rather wretched after the beauty of Audeley Chase of course. It would have seemed *triste* after our tiny apartment in Paris." She paused and sighed.

"Which you made attractive," murmured Ogilvie.

"But," resumed May, "Miss Macallan was very kind from the first, and considers me in a way I did not expect. In fact I am more a favoured guest than a companion. I wish I had more to do to earn the salary I suppose I am to get."

"What? Has my estimable relative given you nothing yet? nor opened the subject in any way?"

"No, not yet, but then I have not been here quite three weeks."

"I shall see to that."

"No—no—wait a while; Miss Macallan will soon tell me if I am to stay or not."

"To stay!" he interrupted. "Why yes, of course you will stay!"

"Indeed," continued May thoughtfully. "I often wonder why she ever thought of having a companion. I do not think she wants help in any way, and I do not believe she is inclined to spend more money than she can help. Then she has this piano for my use—but *that* is your doing—" a bright grateful smile and glance—"I think I should have drooped only for it. Why does she want me?"

"You are a close observer, May. However you may depend upon it Euphemia Macallan has her reasons, which probably will remain undiscovered till the crack of doom. She is close-fisted and close-minded, but not altogether bad on the whole—and you get on?"

"Very well indeed. I think she rather likes me."

"I rather think she does. Don't you know May, you are gifted with a curious power of sympathy that makes you quickly indispensable to those who are accustomed to you, especially to the selfish. I am a very selfish fellow, May, and I cannot say how I missed you when we parted. I have been looking forward to seeing you ever since."

"Have you really?" exclaimed May, much delighted.

"Yes, really. If society would permit such an arrangement I should ask you to be my private secretary and we would travel round the world."

"It would be charming!" said May with calm conviction.

"Most charming," echoed Ogilvie, leaning back in his chair and keeping silence for a moment.

"And so, you are bored to death?" he resumed.

"That is too strong an expression. It is a very new life to me, but I shall get accustomed to it, and, you cannot know, dear Mr. Ogilvie, how grateful I am to you for helping me to escape from the terrible sense of being a burden, a mendicant!" She stretched out her hand and left it in his.

"You are thankful for small mercies, my sweet ward," he said, slowly releasing her hand. "Perhaps some day I may ask some gift which——"

"How glad I should be to be able to do anything for you," she cried, as he paused.

"In the meantime, May, let us make the best of the present. It is a great philosophic achievement to get all the pleasure we

can out of life. Would you like to go to the Criterion to-morrow evening?"

"It would be too delicious," clasping her hands.

"Then I shall arrange it with Miss Macallan. I shall stay till she comes in. Now tell me more of our friends the Conroys," and they entered into a discussion of past and present.

Ogilvie told her how he had stopped in Paris to pay a visit to Madame Falk and bring a report of the dear kind woman. Then he mentioned having heard from Madame Zavadoskor, who was in Russia, whither she had gone to arrange a marriage for her adored son.

The minutes flew fast, and evening was closing in when all too soon the door opened and Miss Macallan in her best "go-to-meeting bonnet" walked in.

"Eh!" she exclaimed in a loud tone. "But this a most agreeable surprise! And when did you arrive, Cousin Ogilvie?"

"By the mail train this morning," he returned, with a certain air of condescension which struck May. "Lost no time you see in making my ward here give an account of herself. Glad to find that all goes well."

"May be, cousin, you'll stop to take a bit of dinner?"

"Thank you, no! I am engaged this evening. But I should like to have some talk with you on business, before I go. Good-bye, my dear May! If I can get places for to-morrow night, I'll telegraph. Good-bye, glad to see you looking so well." Motioning Miss Macallan to precede him, he paused, and turned to give a parting smile and wave of the hand to his adopted ward.

(To be continued.)

"A Home-made Saint"—St. Swithin.

THE biographer of our meteorological saint has thus dubbed him, because St. Swithin never received proper canonization at the Pope's hands at all, owing perhaps, in the first place, to the fact that such dignity was not created till some two hundred years after St. Swithin's death, and secondly (and this is even more probable) because he was essentially an English worthy, one who, outside his own land, had no great name in the councils of Christendom to support a claim to saintship. At all events, the fact remains that the only form of canonization which he ever received was that bestowed upon him at the great ceremonial which took place on the occasion of the "translation" of his remains to Winchester Cathedral. Home-made though he be, however, there is scarce a saint in the calendar, not excepting even St. George or St. Patrick, who has obtained, among British folk, at all events, a wider notoriety. Everybody knows St. Swithin, at least everybody knows St. Swithin's Day, and that the saint, whoever he be, has something to do with the weather. But who St. Swithin may be, and why he has anything to do with the weather, perhaps few persons have ever heard.

Who then was St. Swithin?

St. Swithin was Bishop of Winchester, about two centuries before the Norman Conquest. He was, tradition and history are agreed, a good and holy man, distinguished also for very earnest humility. Now it is upon the latter virtue that tradition has built up a story (unfortunately more plausible than reliable) about the origin of St. Swithin's Day. We all know the old rhyme :

" St. Swithin's Day, if thou dost rain,
For forty days it will remain ;
St. Swithin's Day, if thou be fair,
For forty days 'twill rain nae mair."

Well, the account which passed current for many years, and which Brande in his "Popular Antiquities" takes as correct, was something as follows : "St. Swithin, who was Bishop of Win-

chester, desired with great humility at the time of his death that his body, instead of being buried within the church, should be buried outside on the north of the church, where his corpse might even receive the eaves-droppings from the roof, and be trodden by the feet of the passers-by. In this neglected and dishonoured spot, his remains reposed for about one hundred years, when the clergy suddenly became indignant at the insult to the Bishop's memory, and accordingly on an appointed day they assembled to convey with great pomp and dignity the saint's bones into the adjoining Cathedral of Winchester. But as they were about to commence the ceremony, the rain burst forth with unexampled fury, continuing for the space of forty days. The monks interpreted this as a warning against the profanation of the saint's remains, contrary to his dying commands, and in consequence, instead of disturbing his grave, they built a chapel over it, at which chapel many astounding miracles subsequently took place. The day fixed upon by the clergy for the translation of St. Swithun's remains was that of the 15th of July, hence the popular connection with the atmospheric conditions of that particular anniversary. This statement is, or has been, the popular tradition; unfortunately, however, it has no authority to support it, and compared with all we do know authoritatively of the facts of the saint's life, affords a very complete illustration of the curious inversion of actual incidents which tradition is so prone to indulge in.

We owe to the Rev. John Earle, Professor of Anglo-Saxon, in the University of Oxford, the elucidation of the real facts of St. Swithun's life and labours. Professor Earle published some years ago, a fac-simile of a Saxon manuscript of the 10th century, containing the earliest fragment of knowledge respecting St. Swithun, and in an essay on the subject, Mr. Earle has collected all reliable data, which, at the same time, is neither very ample nor very exhaustive. Such as it is, however, it is not devoid of interest.

Swithun, or Swithun, was born in the neighbourhood of Winchester, about the year 800. He was a monk of the old Abbey of Winchester, and rose to be its Prior. He gained the favour of Egbert, King of Wessex, who entrusted him with the education of his son. There is indeed one bit of authentic record of St. Swithun at this time, for to a charter granted by

King Egbert in 838 there are appended the signatures of Elmstan *Episcopus*, and Swithun, *Diaconus* of Winchester. As a matter of fact, St. Swithin succeeded Elmstan in the Bishopric of Winchester in 852. As a bishop, St. Swithin seems to have been a patriotic and broad-minded man, one too somewhat in advance of his time. By his aid and initiation many important improvements were effected in the city of Winchester, including the erection of several churches; while owing to him the river Itchen was spanned by a fine stone bridge, the first bridge of that kind seen in those parts. After the accession of his pupil, Ethelwulf, he was that monarch's counsellor in all "religious matters, and the peaceful arts," while it throws a curious light upon the conditions of government in those days to read that at the same time, Alstan, Bishop of Sherborne, had charge of military and foreign affairs. Among the "religious matters" in which St. Swithin's influence with King Ethelwulf was very potent, was one which is of interest to us in the present day, namely, the payment of ecclesiastical tithes. Tithe-rent as a provision for English clergy, owes indeed its inauguration to St. Swithin. He induced Ethelwulf to set apart a tenth of his own lands for religious purposes, and although tithes were not a legal obligation till the time of Athelstane, nor indeed finally settled till the reign of King Edgar, Bishop Swithin of Winchester must be conceded as having the honour, or the opprobrium, whichever way people may regard the matter, of being their originator. King Ethelwulf's favour to St. Swithin was very great, and it has been conjectured that the king chose him to accompany his son, the great Alfred, when a boy, on his famous visit to Rome.

St. Swithin died about 862. His curious choice as to the place of his interment is authentic enough. His biographer thinks (and with every show of reason) that the good Bishop may have so directed his sepulture in order to combat, and possibly put an end to, the common and senseless superstition of the time against that especial portion of the graveyard. At all events, he so desired to be buried, and he so was actually buried, and his remains so reposed for upwards of a century. It is highly probable, indeed it is pretty certain, that but for the intervention of Archbishop Dunstan, the Bishop's bones would have been left undisturbed to the present moment, and our meteorological

department consequently bereft of a titular saint. Dunstan, however, the better to further his own particular views and desires on the question of a greater development of the monastic system, thought it desirable to revive the popular veneration for Bishop Swithin, who in his lifetime had been a strict and warm upholder of monastic principles and discipline. At this time, moreover, the cathedral church of Winchester was being rebuilt under the episcopate of Ethelwold, a close confederate of Dunstan's. It was believed by these prelates that the enrichment of the new cathedral by some distinguished and saintly relics, would be exceedingly desirable. The methods of manufacturing such relics were, as we know, a mere matter of ingenuity. Thus it is not surprising to find that at this time wonderful reports began to be circulated throughout Winchester and the district of the miraculous appearances, on more than one occasion, of Bishop Swithin. The whole account of these is given in the Saxon fragment of manuscript before mentioned. "Bishop Swithin," says this record, "appeared one night in a dream to a poor decrepit smith, and requested him to go to a certain priest named Eadsige, who with others had been ejected from the Abbey of Old Minster, and desired him from Swithin to repair to Bishop Ethelwold, and command him to open his, Swithin's, grave, and bring his bones into the church. The smith replied to his ghostly visitor, with some show of reason, that Eadsige would not believe in him or his message. Swithin thereupon, to prove his reality, told the smith that he would find the authenticity of the vision established, by going to his Swithin's, stone coffin and pulling from it an iron ring, which, in consequence of supernatural aid, would yield without the slightest difficulty." Swithin had, however, to repeat his visit to the smith three times, ere that sceptical person could be induced to move in the matter. But in the end, says the chronicle, the smith did go to Swithin's coffin, and did withdraw the ring, which yielded at the slightest insistence, as Swithin had predicted it would, and gave the message to Eadsige, who—for he also was reluctant at first to mix *himself* up in the affair—at last gave the same to Bishop Ethelwold. From this time the miracles reported at St. Swithin's tomb increased and multiplied with most accommodating precision. It would not seem, however, that anything of originality, or, if we may say so, anything of a new departure

in the manner of the miracles can be observed. They appertained indeed to ancient and well-established models. For example, a man born a hunchback was relieved of his hump for ever by praying at the grave, and another was cured of a "grievous ailment of the eyes" in a like manner.

All this was, however, duly reported to King Edgar, who, it is not surprising to find, forthwith formally directed the translation of Swithin's saintly bones to the interior of the Cathedral of Winchester, where they were to be enclosed in a magnificent shrine, placed in a conspicuous position. A splendid ceremonial and high feasting seems to have accompanied the translation of Bishop Swithin's remains, which as a matter of fact did take place on July 15th, 971; while so far from the weather proving unpropitious, or in any way interfering with the business of the day, the record declares that it was "most propitious." The saintship of Bishop Swithin now arose from the additional honour being paid to his memory in re-naming the cathedral by his name. The latter was, however, again changed in the time of Henry VIII.

So much for the true history of our meteorological saint himself. Despite the facts of his life and death, it is not quite, or indeed at all, clear as to why he in especial came to be mixed up with the weather. But the freaks of tradition in this matter are admittedly curious. For example, it is difficult to see why George of Cappadocia, a personage not by any means, if the record is at all reliable, too saintly in character or too good in deed, came to be given the splendid position of England's patron saint, or why on the other hand the good and pious Swithin should have also received the further and utterly slanderous cognomen of "drunken St. Swithin." With respect to the old tradition of St. Swithin's Day, the most reasonable method of accounting for its existence is probably to be found in the supposition of its really Pagan source. All persons familiar with the early history of Christianity know how frequently pagan customs and practices, modified and drawn from their first use, were taken into the service of the Christian faith, and given their part in its ordinances. At any rate, traditions similar to that of St. Swithin's Day with us, are shared by other European countries.

In France, St. Medard's Day, June 8th, and St. Servais and St. Protais' Day, June 19th, correspond to St. Swithin's Day; while

in Belgium a raining saint called St. Gode is believed in ; and in Germany, among other days characteristic of this belief, the Day of the Seven Sleepers is one.

Hone, in his "Every-day Book," mentions a pretty saying current in some parts of England, when rain falls on St. Swithin's Day, namely, "St. Swithin is christening the apples."

As to there being any degree of reliability attaching to the conditions of St. Swithin's Day, it can only be said that observations taken at Greenwich ludicrously set at nought anything of the sort. In point of fact, those years in which rain has fallen on St. Swithin's Day are those in which his day has been succeeded by the fairest weather. Indeed if the record at Greenwich is to be trusted—and what record can be trusted if it is not?—no more notable fallacy has ever reigned secure for centuries than that the 15th of July is in any way distinctively connected with a change in the weather. Nevertheless, most people will like St. Swithin's Day to be fine, and the popular fallacy has so much shadow of excuse for its existence, in that if the weather has been uninterruptedly fine during the earlier half of the summer, it will possibly be followed by wet weather during the latter half, and *vice versa*. A method of argument perhaps too similar to that put forward by the Irishman, who on being asked if it were going to be wet or fine, replied that "It might rain or it might not, he wouldn't say for certain, but anyhow, *it would be one or the other!*"

ELLA MACMAHON.

"His Own Counsel."

BY ADA FIELDER KING.

I AM a barrister—thank goodness, not a briefless one !

I rejoice in the cognomen of Charlie Tredennick. I have plenty of friends, plenty of money, plenty of the good things of this world, am a favourite son—altogether life has smiled on me, and I find it a very good thing indeed.

Educated at Eton, and "Christ's," Oxford, I managed to combine much pleasure during the course of my educational career. All sports were, and are still dear to my soul. But on one occasion one of my favourite pastimes caused curious complications, and finally saw me over one of the ugliest ditches I had ever had to face.

More of this, however, anon.

People, I am told, always like to have a description of the hero or heroine of a story, but how can a fellow describe himself ?

If nature has been kind to him in his personal appearance, by a faithful description he lays himself open to the charge of conceit ! If she has been the reverse, then it must be painful to have to set it down in cold blood.

Here is my photograph, perhaps that will help a little bit. The world pronounced it "admirable."

A big man, evidently carrying plenty of strength from the shoulder, good features, blue eyes—which, except in Court, never look grave. A regulation head of closely cropped, chesnut hair, moustache the same.

Ladies and gentlemen, behold Charlie Tredennick, at your service.

The world would add : "He is a good fellow, has done several useful services, and saved many friends at some momentous crises in their careers !"

So far, so good !

I have chambers in Pall Mall and King's Bench Walk, Temple—I belong to three clubs.

Among my numerous friends I number many fair women.!

I have made it a point of professional honour to be always kindly, courteously, considerate towards them.

The consequence being I have posed as counsel in many delicate cases requiring a good deal of tact and discretion. One of those impertinent Society papers described me the other day as "the Ladies' Counsel"!

Never mind, "let those laugh who win"! Having decidedly done the latter, I can afford to do the former.

From an early period in my life I had always been great at theatricals. My sisters and brothers shared my predilection for them, and we became rather celebrated for our histrionic tendencies.

A certain very pretty Gladys Ponsonby—a great friend of my sisters—a very distant connection of our family, called a cousin by the merest apology, used to spend weeks at my father's house, and was foremost in all our amusements. She was certainly a lovely little thing, the most winning, witching woman I had ever met.

She and I were special allies. By degrees it became a sort of understood thing to include "Gladys and Charlie" together in everything. Nothing was said openly, but it was always *bien entendu*, that eventually Gladys Ponsonby would be my wife. These tacit understandings are, perhaps, not wise; they often lead to, if not misunderstandings, at least a good deal of disappointment in the future.

I do not know if I then thought seriously of marrying her, but I certainly never thought of anybody else doing so.

Gladys was an orphan. She had been spending some months abroad, with her old guardian and his wife, when the news came home that a marriage had been arranged, and would shortly take place between our pretty Gladys and Sir John Carew—a man at least thirty or forty years older than herself.

We were all astonished! My sisters were indignant, my parents looked grave, I felt *very odd*!

Gladys' letters became few and far between, and from their tone it was evident her inclinations had in no way been consulted.

I was young, not much given to reflection over many things at that period, but I had an intuitive perception the less I probed my heart, or peered into the innermost recesses of my soul, the

better for my own well-being and the future peace of Gladys Ponsonby and myself.

The marriage took place in Rome. We heard Sir John Carew was a rich man, an old friend of her guardian, but that was all the information vouchsafed to any of Gladys' friends.

Some months later I met Sir John and Lady Carew in Paris, they were *en route* for England.

Gladys was even more lovely than formerly. I confess to a sensation of tightening about my heart-strings when I felt her hand in mine.

Lady Carew was now a fashionable woman of the world, exquisitely beautiful, maddeningly winning to all who looked on her, but to me she was still the same artless Gladys Ponsonby as of yore.

Sir John, cold and pompous, was evidently proud of his young wife. He understood I was a relation of Gladys'—she had wisely laid stress on this, and fortunately the baronet had not thought it necessary to enquire as to the exact degree of consanguinity between the respective families—and accordingly bade me welcome, at the same time requesting, as he was suffering from gout, I would kindly constitute myself his wife's escort in Paris.

Nothing could have suited me better, I was determined to bury the past, enjoying the present.

I could still bask in Gladys' beautiful presence, I should not be cut off from her. By conducting myself as a sensible man I should be able to retain the close friendship of this charming woman, at the same time giving the world no chance of talking.

Gladys and I tacitly agreed to be the dearest friends for ever! We were discreet enough to enter into no explanation, that ground might have been dangerous!

We were both profound believers in elective affinity, and knew our friendship could no more be avoided than the east wind in March.

We were quite content, I was a constant *habitué* of the Carew's house both in the country, and in Park Lane.

Time passed on, Gladys had all she wanted in the way of money and luxuries. But I knew she was painfully bored by her pompous old husband, who became very irritable with increasing gout! Still Lady Carew posed as one of the most prosperous women in London.

Her parties were always successful. Balls, dinners, tableaux, were always acknowledged as such ; with so bright and vivacious a *châtelaine* they could scarcely be otherwise.

I heard it *chuchoté* that Sir John was a martyr to the green-eyed monster as well as gout, but Gladys never aired her wrongs to me, and I never endeavoured to find them out.

Much as I was always at their house, I saw but little of Sir John. He was Conservative member for the division of his county, and religiously sat out the debates at St. Stephen's from February to August.

Now it happened that in "the long ago," during some theatricals at our house, Gladys and I had played the *rôle* of hero and heroine in a light, pretty, drawing-room comedy.

My character was Ludovic DeCourcy.

For some time after Gladys always called me "Ludo," and, why or wherefore I know not, I used to often sign my letters to her :

"Yours always,

"LUDO."

That these very innocent letters were destined to cause a complication I never foresaw.

Gladys' and my friendship I conscientiously declare had been, although deep, of a very harmless nature. We had never taken any advantage of it. The kiss I still bestowed upon her was of a very brotherly character. I had always given it to her in common with my sisters in former days ; because she was now Gladys Carew, I had not thought it necessary to abandon it !

Besides, a kiss is a very innocent thing ; the dictionary defines it as "A common token of affection" ! If you are fond of a person, why be ashamed of showing it ?

Should anybody doubt my logical powers I refer them to Blackstone's bulky volume ! In that you will find no law of the Medes and Persians respecting a nice little kiss ! I don't even believe Sir Francis Jeune himself would condemn it, and he is a most distinguished judge !

It was an exceedingly cold day in March, wind howling, snow falling, when, while poring over an intricate and important brief just sent to me by a well-known firm in Lincoln's Inn, my clerk brought me a telegram.

My mind was rather full of an interview I had just had with, a perplexed lady of my acquaintance.

Only half-an-hour ago had I escorted her to her brougham which was in waiting at the entrance to the master's house—clever little *diplomate*, she deserved to succeed—at the same time tipping her coachman with a yellow coin in consideration of the snow he had had to encounter during our somewhat lengthy interview. As he looked at me, I knew he voted me one of the right sort!

Now, good-natured fellow though I am, yet I am particular as to professional etiquette, and have always urged my lady clients to remember they must not come to my chambers; when I am to conduct their case, all information and instructions must come from their solicitors! However, I could not always prevent their breaking my rule, and when silvery tones whispered:

"Oh, Mr. Tredennick, it is such a comfort talking to you, you always seem so able to understand the individual difficulties with which I am surrounded. You are so kind and full of sympathy," why, what could I say?

Nothing; my nature is pliable, not adamant! I could only be still kinder, as any chivalrous man would be to a woman!

Now I hastily tore open the yellow envelope; it was from Gladys, begging me to go to her as soon as possible, as she was in great trouble.

What could be the matter?

Evidently, at this summons from beauty in distress, the studying of that important brief must be delayed.

Giving some directions to my clerk, ordering another to call a hansom, I dashed downstairs and soon found myself in Park Lane.

Was it fancy?

I certainly thought the butler looked perturbed as he conveyed me straight to Gladys' boudoir.

"Mr. Tredennick, my lady!"

The door was hastily but noiselessly closed and I was alone with Lady Carew. I could hear Ellis's retreating footsteps.

"Oh, Charlie, I am so thankful you have come!" exclaimed Gladys, pulling herself up from the sofa in which she was curled, buried amongst cushions.

Her voice sounded suspicious. Her cheeks had two bright spots, her violet eyes looked like dewy Czar violets, I could see something had gone very badly with her little ladyship.

"I came off at once, but tell me what is the matter?" I asked.

"The matter is this, I have been cruelly treated, grossly insulted. I am going to leave this house," she replied tragically, drawing herself up to her full height.

She looked charming, her perfect figure encased in a tea-gown of bronze plush and cream lace, well suited to her shell-like skin.

"Who has dared to insult you, Gladys?" I asked amazedly.

"My husband."

"Nonsense! impossible!—you are dreaming, joking, child," I returned soothingly.

"Indeed, I am not! Sir John Carew has always been more or less of a tyrant, to-day his tyranny has culminated in the extremely manly action of opening his wife's private drawers, and—reading her letters!"

These words were uttered with the air of a most ill-used victim.

I was completely taken aback; that there was any complication in the life of Gladys Carew, I could not believe.

"My dear Gladys, you daze me. Explain it all to me."

But now poor little Lady Carew had expended her staying powers, and her efforts to speak ended in heavy sobs, and a prolonged flood of tears.

To any man, owning any approach to manliness, the sight of a woman's tears is always a sad one.

I confess to their always appealing to my heart, in a painfully pertinent manner. I cannot bear to see a woman cry. The man who causes bitter tears ought to be sent to Newgate and treated to the lash. He is a coward and a bully! And as such should be treated.

Now I was in a sorry position, Gladys Carew, apparently broken-hearted, needing much consolation before she could enlighten me as to its cause.

By *judicious* soothing I at last calmed her.

"Look here, Gladys, give us both some tea, and then tell me all."

She complied.

"It was silly to cry, Charlie, but I am so angry. I will tell you all about it."

Then, deprecatingly:

"Don't *you* be angry with me."

I smiled.

"I should never be 'angry' with *you*, dear," I said reassuringly.

"You know I was away for two days. It seems Sir John wanted a paper he declares he gave me about an estimate for a new conservatory at Hillingdon. He never gave it to me at all. But he gets so impatient over everything he could not wait till I got home to ask me for it, but came rummaging up here. He went to my writing-table, upsetting the drawers, turning over everything—not being there, he of course could not find it! But he suddenly discovered three drawers were locked. However, he could find no key to open them, for I always wear that key on my own chain, I put so many things away."

She paused, then continued :

"He could not wait, of course, even a mean trick was better than that! So—he had them forced! Ellis even asked him to wait, pointing out to him how it would tear the drawers about. But no, he was obdurate, the drawers were forced and—and he found my letters!"

Once more Gladys succumbed to the inevitable.

"But these letters—I suppose there was no harm in them?" I queried.

"No, of course not!" came the prompt answer.

"Was there anything besides letters, Gladys?"

She hesitated.

"Come, my dear Gladys, if I am to help you, you must be quite honest with me," I said gently.

"Yes, there were some flowers, forget-me-nots and violets."

"And from whom were these letters which have caused so much mischief?" I asked, mentally cursing the folly of women in retaining old letters, the most dangerous mementoes, the most damaging witnesses, anybody can have.

I was still more electrified at the answer.

"From you, Charlie!"

"From me!" I repeated, aghast.

"Yes. Don't be angry, they were written to me long ago, before—before my marriage. They were all signed 'Ludo.' Sir John has not an idea as to who my correspondent was, this

makes him doubly furious. In vain have I tried to reassure him. But he is cruelly insulting, it is impossible to quiet him. Oh! Charlie, mine was an ill-starred marriage," she concluded.

Here was a pleasant revelation.

"Why did you keep them?" I hazarded.

But no sooner had I said the words than I regretted them.

"Because they were from *you*! Because I could not bury what 'had been' so successfully as some people can! Because I was obliged to carry into my uncongenial married life some sweet memory of brighter, better days. I was made to marry Sir John, but, like other weak, loving women, I was obliged to cling to the dear old past to keep my heart warm in the present. Without that I should have grown utterly cold and heartless. I have been a model wife to an uninteresting, selfish husband, one whom I never liked. But I have kept appearances perfectly to the world, *the* world for which we all sell even our very soul. Now this is my reward!"

Her cheeks flushed, her tiny foot tapped the floor angrily.

"After all *le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle*!"

And she laughed satirically.

"Sir John threatens what?" I felt bound to ask.

"Proceedings in the Divorce Court!"

Her voice was cold and haughty.

"Really! and on what grounds? Also the co-respondent?" I smiled involuntarily.

"The unhappy 'Ludo,' if he can be traced, which seems doubtful! Charlie, stand by me; I have only you!"

The violet eyes were fixed on me appealingly.

"Of course I shall! I must be your counsel for the defence; also that of the unknown 'Ludo.' Now, Gladys, don't cry!"

I bent and kissed her, she looked so forlorn and childish. The golden head was dangerously near my shoulder! How could I in common decency forego this "common token of affection"? I firmly believe Sir Francis would have acted in the same way himself!

"You must get these letters back," I said coolly.

"How? Sir John has taken them; he absolutely refuses to restore them!"

"Does he? Does Ellis by chance know where his secrets are concealed?" I questioned.

"He may; fortunately his valet is away ill, so Ellis has to wait on him, but Ellis is entirely devoted to me," replied Gladys.

"He must be managed. Halloo! Is that the baronet?"

As a blustering voice was heard approaching the precincts of the boudoir.

"Yes! hide yourself behind the *portière*. You know the door leading from the greenhouse down the back stairs, go down that way, then come back here, making Ellis announce you," exclaimed Gladys hastily.

I did her bidding.

From my refuge I could, by gently keeping the *portière* a little open—quite unseen—hear every word which passed between Sir John and his wife.

That the baronet was oblivious of all decency of conduct in his blind fury, I soon discovered. He would listen to no reason. He abused his wife roundly, nay coarsely. Knowing Gladys' high spirit as I did I wondered how she retained her temper.

"Will you return me those letters, Sir John, I may then be able to understand what has so incensed you?" I heard her say.

"Never! I have now placed them under lock and key, they will only leave my library drawer to be placed in the hands of most eminent counsel," roared the baronet.

"As you will," she answered haughtily.

"So far, so good," I thought; "with this clue Ellis may be able to regain the letters."

"For shame, Sir John, leave go of my hand instantly, you hurt me. Are you coward enough to strike a woman!" exclaimed Lady Carew.

"Ever since my marriage—my hated marriage, forced upon me by my guardian—you have more or less *bullied* me; I can give it no other term. I have borne it silently. I scorned you too much to complain. To-day it has culminated in open insult. Suspicion I will not bear. Unless you make me an apology within twenty-four hours, I leave your house. The law, you say, forbids it. Pshaw! Remember in law two can play at the same game, and in this case you may find yourself on the losing side."

Her voice was cold and scornful. To regain the boudoir I

must seek the back stairs. Noiselessly I moved away. Fortunately I encountered no servants in my descent. I gained the hall and quickly made my way into the street. Then I once more pealed the bell. The servants looked astonished at my again being the summoner. Ellis, grave and imperturbable, ushered me upstairs; I placed a fiver in his hand, at the same time placing my finger on my lip.

"I understand, you may rely on me, sir."

Once again sounded the ordinary announcement:

"Mr. Tredennick, my lady!"

What a scene upon which I was introduced. The baronet, boiling with rage, had in seizing his wife's hand pulled off her rings.

"Pick them up. Put on your wedding ring again at once," roared Sir John.

"Never!" retorted the exasperated wife. "You have taken it off yourself, it will never be replaced by me. You may burn it, do what you will with it, but never will I replace such a badge of servitude."

There was a dangerous look in Gladys' eyes.

"I command you," said Sir John, now purple, and choking with rage.

"Then you command in vain," was Gladys' cool reply.

"You are my wife!" he thundered.

"In name, perhaps! but only in name. I have been a faithful wife to you, but from this day forward I cease to live in your house," she replied icily.

He seized her hand to replace the ring; in some way it slipped from his fingers, spinning into the fire. A scornful look pervaded Gladys' beautiful face.

"Thank you for my freedom, Sir John, gratefully, thankfully, I accept it. You soldered my fetters, you have now caused them to melt. I am really indebted to you."

The haughty tones were very unlike Gladys'. Suddenly she appeared to see me.

"I am sorry, Charlie, you should have been ushered in on such a charming scene of connubial bliss. Will you have some tea?"

I muttered something. The baronet evinced no surprise at my appearance. I was too constant a visitor for him to do so. But he did look most completely ashamed of himself, his

aspect being more like that of a whipped cur than anything else.

Naturally, being a bully he was a coward. As such it was not pleasant for a fellow man to discover him.

Cowards never like to be caught enacting their favourite rôle!

"You understand my terms, Sir John. Further conversation in your present excited state is undesirable. Don't let me detain you longer, your time I know is valuable. To-morrow I shall hear from you. Further arrangements will pass entirely through Mr. Croft, my legal adviser, in Lincoln's Inn.

Gladys' tones were haughtily cold.

She bowed proudly, laying her hand on the bell, a plain intimation the interview was at an end.

I really thought Sir John would have had a fit there and then. I looked warningly at her, but she was past all remonstrance.

We heard him thunder along the corridor, he had been powerless to do more than get out of the room.

"Isn't he charming?" asked Gladys.

"This is beyond a joke," I replied gravely.

"Quite," she assented; "besides, Charlie, Sir John never descends to joking! He is a member of St. Stephen's, also a justice of the peace! How can you for a moment believe he would be so frivolous?"

She was bitterly satirical.

I looked at my watch.

"I must be going, Gladys, I have an engagement."

"Oh! I, too, am dining out. To-morrow I must see you again," she answered.

"Very well, what hour? You must instruct Ellis as to those letters being regained. I have spoken to him. Mum's the word."

She smiled.

"Dear Charlie! you are kind. I will send Ellis to you. Good-night."

She held up her peach-like cheek, and I promptly administered the *common* token of affection.

I felt very sorry for her; I foresaw more trouble than she did, through Sir John's insane jealousy.

The following morning I was busy writing, when my clerk informed me "Mr. Ellis wished to see me."

He was quickly shown in.

"Good morning, sir ; will you kindly take charge of this packet for me? I am very likely going to the country, and I should not like to leave my papers. I hope you won't consider me taking a liberty," said Ellis respectfully.

"Not at all. Very glad you came. Anything more I can do for you, Ellis?"

"No thank you, sir, not just now. I daresay we shall see you at our house, sir, about four o'clock to-day."

"Probably. How is her ladyship?"

"I have not seen her this morning, sir. Sir John left for Hillingdon unexpectedly last evening."

"Really!"

Ellis took his departure.

I opened the packet ; a goodly number of letters tied together with blue ribbon met my gaze. The flower mementoes were not there. Should I read them? My eye caught some words, distinctly I recognized my own writing. I glanced at the letters. There was nothing criminating to either writer or recipient ; a little tenderness of tone, perhaps, but remember that is not illegal.

I flung them into the fire ; as I saw the white ashes I reflected "dead men can tell no tales."

Sir John had lost the proofs he thought he had secured. Not that they would have saved him much. Why had he gone to Hillingdon? Possibly to obtain from other secret recesses other proofs of his wife's guilt.

I knew from Ellis's manner I was expected in Park Lane at four o'clock.

Punctually I appeared.

"How good of you, Charlie! I am going to Guy (her brother) and you are to take me," was Gladys' greeting.

She was all ready for travelling.

But, Gladys, I heard you give Sir John twenty-four hours' grace it has not expired yet," I replied.

"True! But he left such an insulting letter for me last night that I am absolved from my promise. We go by the six o'clock express. You have time to send to Pall Mall for your things."

She spoke coolly, determinately.

"But, my dear Gladys, do not leave his house," I expostulated.

"I will not remain in it another day. He has treated me shamefully. Read that!"

She flung me a letter ; it was cruel, unmanly. My blood boiled as I read. I knew further expostulation would be useless.

"Look here, if you are bent on going, Gladys, of course I will take you to Guy. But, remember, I counsel you to pause."

"No Charlie, I will not stay with Sir John."

"Very well then, I will meet you at Paddington at six o'clock. I must make one or two arrangements."

To this she consented.

By dint of hurrying and scurrying I found myself on the departure platform in time to escort Lady Carew to the reserved compartment Ellis had engaged.

On our transit she revealed to me how cleverly the faithful Ellis had regained her letters. The man's discretion was marvellous.

Guy Ponsonby was amazed at our arrival at Branksome Park about eleven o'clock. He was unfeignedly glad to see Gladys, of whom he was devotedly fond, but on hearing how matters stood, he looked grave.

After sending her to bed, he and I sat long in the smoking-room discussing what could be arranged.

"We must try and patch it up, Charlie ; poor child, I don't want her name bruited about. Carew I never have liked, and can picture that to his wife he is an untold nuisance. It was an ill-starred marriage. You, Tredennick, were the man for her !"

"Too late to think of that," I answered hastily.

The last few hours had revealed much to me.

I knew now how fondly, truly, Gladys Ponsonby loved me. Aye ! and I her. The unfortunate truth had been laid bare. One thing, our love had never impeached our honour. But on that journey from Paddington more than ever had been borne out to me the picture of "what might have been" !

Far better had been our previous state of blind security than this unfortunate *dénouement*. I feared the future might prove a hard struggle for Gladys and myself. Both now realised the truth. But at all costs we must keep up appearances, and blind the eyes of the world !

The following day Guy and I tried our utmost to conciliate Gladys, but in vain. I returned to Town, empowered by Guy to do all that was necessary in the business.

We hoped the baronet would be brought to reason.

But in two days I heard to the contrary. Sir John had placed the matter in the hands of his solicitors.

I at once went to Mr. Croft, the Ponsonbys' solicitor. We both agreed the case could not be sustained.

He retained me as counsel for the defence, if Sir John persisted in going to court with this one-legged appeal.

"His solicitors will never let him make such a fool of himself," laughed Croft.

"They may try, but Carew is the most obstinate man in London. I don't believe the Lord Chancellor himself could restrain him," was my reply.

Two days later I heard from the baronet's solicitors the case was to come on, notwithstanding their distinct advice to the contrary, and offering me a handsome retaining fee.

Of course, in a courteous letter I immediately let them know I was retained already for the defence!

Every effort was made to coerce Sir John to be guided by the far wiser opinion of the men of law—but quite in vain.

I marvelled how any case could be made out; he had no witnesses.

Had he not yet discovered the loss of the letters?

Croft told me every effort was being made by the prosecution to find out the supposed co-respondent, but unavailingly.

"Who can he be?" he said.

"A myth of Sir John's brain," I replied.

The usual formula was gone through; the day for the trial came on.

A more pig-headed, obstinate client than Sir John could never have existed, and he wore the patience of his solicitors to the extreme pitch of endurance.

We heard there was a hitch. The little evidence Sir John had appeared to have vanished.

His counsel begged to withdraw the case.

I spoke strongly on behalf of my client. I assured the Court her honour was stainless, her reputation irreproachable.

The co-respondent must evidently be an imaginary person, for every means had been used by the prosecution to trace him, but in vain!

In fact, I managed to throw the whole odium on Sir John, who now posed as a tyrant and fool!

· We heard he was furious at his failure. He would not believe until the last moment he had no letters to show !

· Whither they had vanished for ever remained a mystery to him.

So I defended with flying colours the respondent and nameless co-respondent !

The adage runs, "The man who is his own counsel has a fool for his client." But really, in this case I think its truth was not proven !

Sir John, rendered very sore by his foolish defeat, now blustered very loudly. He realised he had made a ludicrous spectacle of himself, and threatened applying for restitution of conjugal rights !

But it was strongly represented to him, that after his previous conduct, he would have to sue very humbly at the feet of his wife respecting her return to his roof ;

The Court could and would not recognise any appeal he might make.

Sir Francis had already spoken in unpleasantly strong terms regarding his conduct, and in very glowing ones of Lady Carew's !

Guy Ponsonby and I strongly urged Gladys to consent to a reconciliation. Her position, apart from her husband, would be awkward ; a woman, especially when young and beautiful, is always open to misrepresentation and slander.

Croft suggested, very wisely, after such a *fiasco* we could make the Baronet cry *pax* to any amount.

At length Gladys surrendered on conditions.

We made the terms high, you may be sure. And the Baronet had to swallow much which, to his nature, must have been gall and wormwood.

Whatever jealousy should gnaw his soul in the future, would have to be silently endured.

Gladys and I once more resolved to ignore all dangerous ground, so as to enjoy the present. I was as constant an *habitué* at her house as formerly. Every day, at some hour or other, I found myself in her boudoir.

Faithfully Ellis kept his share of the transaction locked in his own breast.

Whether, after my strong condemnation of his conduct, my

frequent presence was always congenial to the Baronet I never troubled my head to enquire. I am bound to say he was always superlatively civil; perhaps he considered, after his former experience, "discretion the better part of valour."

Time rolled on; often Gladys and I would laugh over our joint experiences of a visit to the President of the Divorce Court!

Beautiful, witching Lady Carew went gaily on her way. Probably we both knew we had learnt our own heart's secret. In an unguarded moment we had revealed it to each other, but wisely we held our peace.

* * * * *

EPILOGUE.

Tempus edax rerum! clears many lives, causing many a life horizon to reveal a glorious sunshine.

Never was a truer proverb than "*Tout vient à celui qui sait attendre.*" I speak authoritatively, for I speak from personal experience, the best authority there is.

I suppose I knew how to wait, for all sh^o came to me.

Three years after I enacted the rôle of pleader for "his own counsel," Sir John Carew went over to the great majority. I am bound to say few tears were shed for him.

One year later Lady Carew became my wife!

We are the happiest couple anywhere in the whole kingdom, Gladys is lovely as ever, witching to the last degree, but to none more beautiful, more witching, than her own husband. A marvellous record in the nineteenth century!

Often in the boudoir in Park Lane we still take "counsel" together. I am a Q.C. now. My wife declares some grey hairs are mingling with my chestnut ones. Probably the result of my wig!

Gladys looks over my shoulder as I conclude saying these words.

"I wish you would use some hair restorer, Charlie; but never mind, you are still quite as good-looking as when you were 'His Own Counsel.'"

For the Second Time.

BY QUINTON GORDON,

Author of "A STORY OF ENGAGEMENTS," ETC.

"MY dear fellow! the fact of the matter is, you have made a complete ass of yourself. Put the whole facts of the case before the girl. Tell her, if you marry without your father's consent, you will be absolutely penniless, and *then* see what she will say. Of course, you are a good catch for her, and there is no doubt whatever that she knows what she is about—trust a woman for that."

The speaker was a man of about thirty—tall, broad-shouldered and muscular, with a well-set, well-shaped head, and a good-humoured, ugly face, redeemed by a pair of dark-brown, kind-looking eyes. Just then, however, his face wore a hard, cynical expression—an expression which invariably came there when women were discussed in any way. He was looking out of the window into the garden below, watching two little sparrows fighting over a piece of bread. He waited until they had finished, and then turned round again.

"Well?" he said enquiringly. "What are you going to do, Dunstan?"

"I don't know *what* to do," was the answer.

Dunstan Manning had been sitting, leaning forward with his face in his hands, but at the last question roused himself and looked at his friend in a beseeching, helpless sort of way not unlike a dumb animal in pain.

He was a handsome young fellow of about four-and-twenty, with good, well-cut features, and a ruddy, fair complexion. There were indications of weakness, however, about the mouth, showing a want of will power—a tendency to rely upon other judgment than his own.

"What do you advise, Jack?" he said disconsolately.

Jack Lennox made an impatient movement. There were times when Dunstan tried him exceedingly, and this was one of them.

"In the first place, you must know whether you really love the girl or not?" he asked slowly.

"Of course I do," said Dunstan, and indeed just then he really believed he did.

"Very well," said Jack. "Then it is easy enough to find out whether she loves you. Tell her——"

"She *said* she loved me," interrupted Dunstan, blushing furiously at the very thought of it.

"Pooh! that goes for nothing," said Jack contemptuously. "They'll *say* anything. Put her to the proof. Tell her you have not yet told your father, and that if you marry without his consent you will be totally without the wherewithal to provide bread and butter, much less luxuries, and then see what her answer is. If she draws back in any way, you will know that it is your money she wants, and not you, and there will be an end of the whole thing. But if, on the other hand, you find she loves you for yourself, why then be a man. Go to the governor, tell him that you love this girl, that she has no money, but that she is a good woman—and a lady."

"Couldn't," said Dunstan nervously. "You don't know what the old man is."

Jack looked at him steadily for a minute, then shrugged his shoulders.

"Well!" he said, "I tell you plainly, I don't think myself there will be any occasion to explain matters to your father, because, judging from what I have seen of women, I think when she finds you have no money and no prospects, she will be only too glad to get rid of you. In that case, pull yourself together, bear it like a man, and let her go to the devil!"

Dunstan shivered. He couldn't bear unpleasantness of any description. His whole nature shrank from it.

"If she gives me up, Jack, I think it'll kill me," he said miserably.

"Not a bit of it!" was Jack's answer. "My dear fellow, people don't die of that sort of thing. That would be a very easy way of getting out of it. They suffer—infernally—for the time, and"—with a catch in his breath—"some few don't get over it perhaps, but one has to go on living, you know, just the same. Now, go and see this girl to-morrow and get it over, and let me know the result."

"I will," said Dunstan. "Thanks, old chap!" And he held out his hand to Lennox, who shook it silently.

Jack Lennox waited until he heard the front door bang, and then flung himself down in an arm-chair with a sense of relief.

"Good heavens! Fancy coming to *me* for advice about a love affair!" he muttered to himself bitterly. "And that young fool thinks he's in love! Bah!"

* * * * *

Under a magnificent copper-beech, with its wide-spreading branches, a girl was sitting, swaying herself dreamily to and fro on a loose branch, and humming softly under her breath. It was evening—and it was June. She was not a particularly pretty girl, but there was a charm about her, a gracefulness in every action, which made one forget her want of beauty. And she had lovely hair. Very fair, soft hair, that rippled of its own accord and curled itself lovingly into little rings on her forehead. Her dress was white and simple, drawn in at the waist with a silver buckle.

Her name was Lisa Masters, and she was the girl to whom Dunstan Manning had been engaged to be married for the last three months, unknown to any one but his friend Jack Lennox. She lived with Dunstan's aunt as companion, and had not an easy life of it by any means, albeit she was of an essentially cheerful nature, and not given to brood over trifles. It was the awful monotony that was so irksome to her; the same drives at the same hour every day, the same sort of books to be read every day, religious ones in the morning, essays, or something equally instructive before the afternoon drive, and books from Mudie's in the evening, interspersed with bits of village gossip and some of the servants' delinquencies.

Just before Dunstan had come into her life, it had grown almost unbearable, and a feeling of despair had taken possession of her at times at the very thought of going on in the same groove perhaps for years, until she had grown old, and cross, and unattractive, and had lost the capacity for enjoying anything. But since Dunstan had told her he loved her, how different everything had seemed! Before, she had existed, *now* she lived. She wondered as she sat there swaying herself happily to and fro, what she had done to deserve such happiness! Why *she*,

above all other women, should have been chosen by such a handsome, noble fellow as Dunstan to be his wife!

Her thoughts, however, at this moment, were interrupted by the appearance of Dunstan himself. Lisa sprang off the branch, and went quickly towards him.

"Dunstan!" she exclaimed joyfully, holding out her hand and greeting him with a loving smile. "When *did* you come? I thought you had gone to Scotland?"

"Yes," said Dunstan hurriedly, "I—er—I wanted to come down again for something."

"To see me?" she asked, looking up at him with a mischievous little glance, and walking with him under the shade of the tree. But there was no answering smile on Dunstan's face. He looked tired and worried, and Lisa felt instinctively that something was wrong and became grave directly.

"What is it, Dunstan?" she asked eagerly, slipping her arm through his and nestling up to him in her confiding way. Dunstan hesitated. It had been all very well when talking it over with Jack; it had seemed easy enough then to just run down and put things before Lisa, and see what she would say; but it did not seem so easy when he was with her, and he wondered how he should begin. He had to go back again that same night too, and he had only two hours.

"What is what?" he asked evasively.

"Dunstan, I am sure something is wrong," said Lisa, "Do tell me what it is. Has your aunt found out about—about *us*?"

"No," said Dunstan, feeling relieved somehow that she had led up to it. "But the fact is, Lisa, I am afraid my father will get to hear of it, and—and—if he does—well, I don't know *what* we shall do."

Lisa took her arm out of his and stopped.

"What do you mean?" she asked, looking quietly at him. "Don't know what we shall do? In what way?"

Dunstan felt desperate.

"It's like this, Lisa," he said, taking both her hands in his, and looking down into her deep violet eyes, which were just then dark with an unknown dread. "If my father knew I was engaged to—to—well, anyone who was not rich, he would disinherit me, and I should be next door to a beggar. The

thing is—would you care to be tied up to a poor man, and have to wait years, perhaps, before you could marry him?"

He grasped her hands hard in his, and looked at her with yearning eyes, while his heart beat almost to suffocation.

"Dunstan," Lisa said, with a sigh of intense relief, as she realised that *that* was all, "I love you so much that I don't care *how* long I wait for you, or how poor you are. How *could* you doubt me?"

And she drew her hands away from him, and put her arms lovingly round his neck. But Dunstan drew back a little. A moment before he had been in an agony lest her answer should be against him, but now, the thought of facing his father came back to him, and he shrank from it, as he always shrank from anything difficult or disagreeable.

"You don't understand, Lisa," he said, "you have no idea what my father is when he is put out about anything. There will be a most fearful row, and all the rest of it, don't you know, and—well—" helplessly, "Oh! by Jove, I don't know *what* to do."

Lisa said nothing for a moment, only looked at him with a nameless dread at her heart, an instinctive foreboding of trouble coming.

"Dunstan," she said softly. "You said when you asked me to be your wife, that you would go through *anything* for my sake. Should *you* mind being poor, if—if you had *me*?"

Dunstan moved impatiently.

"You don't understand, Lisa," he repeated, irritably, and looking away from her, "it is impossible to live on air. I think—well, don't *you* think we had better wait a few years, and—er—see what turns up?"

Lisa slowly moved a few steps back from him.

"I *quite* understand," she said, quietly, but her face was very white and her mouth quivered a little in spite of herself. "I certainly should not like to ruin your prospects for life, and as you do not consider me *worth* working for, there is an end of the matter. You have made a mistake; yours was only a passing fancy, you never loved me."

Dunstan caught hold of her fiercely, almost roughly.

"I *did* love you. I *do* love you," he said, passionately. "Oh! my darling, don't give me up. I *cannot* live without you," and

drawing her to him, he showered down kisses on her mouth, and throat, and chin. But Lisa drew back.

"You will live very well without me," she said in a hard sort of voice that did not sound like her own. "I will return your—things."

Just then a bell rang once, twice, thrice, which was the signal that Lisa was wanted, and only too thankful to get away anywhere she flew across the lawn, and into the house, leaving Dunstan standing under the tree, with a miserable, blank feeling at his heart, and yet a sense of relief that he was *free*.

* * * * *

"Well?" said Jack Lennox, with a keen glance at Dunstan's white miserable face, when he returned late at night, dusty, tired and worn out. "To be? or *not* to be?"

"Oh, hang it, hold your tongue," answered Dunstan curtly, flinging himself into a chair.

Jack looked at the hopeless, dejected figure huddled up in the chair, and smiled bitterly. Then he went over and laid his hand on his friend's shoulder.

"You are well rid of her," he said in an odd voice. "Forget her, and for the future keep clear of women. The greatest troubles on this earth are connected in some way or other with a woman. I wouldn't marry a girl like that were she the last woman in creation."

And Dunstan felt too weary and sick at heart to explain then, and the opportunity, once lost, did not occur again.

* * * * *

Three years had passed, and circumstances had reversed themselves with regard to Jack and Dunstan, for the latter had long ago forgotten his fancy for Lisa Masters, while the former had changed his opinion about women, having fallen deeply in love with the dearest little girl in the world, who returned it quite as warmly, and had promised to be his wife.

From Jack's ugly, honest face the hard cynical look had fled, to be replaced by an expression of deep content and good fellowship with all the world.

Dunstan had often expressed his gratitude to his friend, Jack Lennox, for the wholesome advice he had given him about *his* love affair, for his father had died only six months after his broken-off engagement with Lisa, leaving him a goodly income

in addition to the estate, and as Dunstan himself expressed it, "He was glad he hadn't worried the old man about that, don't you know, for he had found that it *had* been only a fancy, so things were best as they were." A sentiment in which Lennox entirely agreed, believing, as he still did, in Lisa's mercenary motives in giving up his friend, Dunstan never having explained the exact circumstances to him.

"She has the most lovely hair and eyes, Dunstan," Lennox was saying dreamily one night, as the two men sat smoking at the open window in Dunstan's rooms, "I don't think you have ever seen such hair."

"No?" said Dunstan, but his thoughts went back to Lisa, somehow, and he thought of how lovely *her* hair had been, and that she had had nice eyes too. What a fool he had made of himself with that girl to be sure! And how glad he felt now, that dear old Jack had had sense enough to persuade him to put a stop to it. And yet an involuntary sigh escaped him in spite of himself, for there *had* been times when he had missed Lisa more than he cared to own even to himself, and had longed for the love and sympathy which is quite as dear to the heart of a man as a woman.

"Haven't you a photograph of her, old man?" he asked, rousing himself.

"Yes," Jack answered, "but," with a tender half smile, "a photograph doesn't do her justice. It is the pretty colouring, and above all, the expression of her face which is so charming. In repose, she looks rather sad, but when she talks, or is interested in anything, her whole face lights up and she looks quite a different being. I should like you to see her."

"Well, let's see her photo," said Dunstan, who, to tell the truth, was getting a little tired of hearing these confidences. It is one thing to confide one's own love affairs to someone else, but return confidences listened to for a time are apt to become monotonous.

Lennox put his hand inside his coat and drew out a small case, which he opened and regarded silently for a moment or two.

"There she is, bless her!" he said; then handed it across to Dunstan, who took it lazily. For a brief space silence fell upon the room. It was broken by a low, expressive whistle from Dunstan.

"By Jove!" he said, looking at Lennox in a dazed sort of way "Lisa Masters!"

"Certainly—Lisa Masters," repeated the other. "How did you know her name? Ever seen her before?"

"Seen her before? Why, it's the girl I was engaged to three years ago."

"What?" breathed Lennox hoarsely, and an awful expression swept over his rugged face. He had risen and was leaning heavily against the window-shutter, his hands opening and shutting convulsively. Dunstan, his handsome face bent down scrutinisingly over the photograph in his hand, took no notice.

"Lisa Masters, by Jove!" he repeated with a half-puzzled little laugh.

"It's a lie!" panted the other, with a fearful oath, catching the photograph roughly from between Dunstan's fingers. "It's a lie! You know it." But in his heart he knew it was not a lie.

"It is the truth," answered Dunstan quietly. "Lisa left my aunt soon after that little affair, and went to live with some of her own people in Perth, and I have never heard from or of her from that day to this."

Perth! Yes, then it *was* true, and Lennox remembered now how one day Lisa had told him she had had such a sad story in her life, and had begged him not to ask her what it was, but to trust her and let it rest. And he had answered, laughingly, that no doubt they had both some little things to tell each other some day, but she was to let all sad things go to the winds now and be happy.

And this was the girl who had heartlessly jilted a man because he was poor, with never a thought that she might possibly break his heart and ruin his life. Luckily she had not succeeded in doing either in Dunstan's case. And yet when he thought of Lisa as he knew her, her sweet gentle nature, her generous, unselfish disposition, and her graceful womanly dignity, his whole soul refused to take it in.

He had flung himself into his chair again, and was leaning his head in his hands, his face white as death.

"My God!" he muttered between his teeth. "What a fool I have been—what a blind, insensate fool!"

After a moment or two he rose, and crossed the room towards the door. As he reached it, he paused and staggered slightly.

"I say, old chap, where are you going?" said Dunstan quickly. He never forgot the look on the other's face as he answered, almost inarticulately:

"Don't speak to me—don't come near me or—by Heaven, I'll kill you."

Then he flung open the door and went out.

"Oh, I say, Jack, you know——" began Dunstan. But he got no answer.

* * * * *

A night and a day had gone. A girl was kneeling by the side of her bed in the starlit darkness, shaken by a grief too deep and cruel for tears. In her hot little hand a crumpled letter rustled drearily. She knew it by heart—already.

"I was a fool to trust you. I was a fool to love you. But—you are a woman—and deceit is second nature to women. If it is any satisfaction to you to know that you have killed a man's soul and sent him doubly to the devil, that satisfaction may be yours. Enjoy it—gloat over it, if you can."

"Ah, Jack, Jack, have pity, have pity," sobbed the poor child. "I cannot bear it, my heart is broken—broken."

And the sobbing wind at the casement seemed to catch up the bitter refrain and bear it away into the darkness—"Broken! —broken!"

"The Primrose League Party."

BY SARAH CATHERINE BUDD.

"WE *must* have a pretty little supper party after our great meeting, Daisy. We *must* somehow make this Habitation the best in England."

Thus spake Mrs. Glyde, the Primrose Dame *par excellence*, of the neighbourhood of Rippington.

Mrs. Glyde was a very popular woman in her county, and could ride after hounds better than most men.

She had just come in from hunting, and was standing in the middle of the pretty drawing-room, of the fine old house, which had been in her husband's family for ages.

Mrs. Glyde was not good-looking, but she was animated and bright, and her tones were clear and decided.

She was the most affable woman in the whole county, and at heart the proudest.

"Write out the list of names at once, Daisy," continued Mrs. Glyde, sipping her tea and turning towards a young girl seated at a writing-table close by.

"Certainly, mother, directly," said Miss Glyde, with that loving readiness to please which comes naturally to some people.

Mrs. Glyde put down her cup, and, telling some names rapidly off on her fingers, paused.

"The young Bensons," she said. "Yes, we must ask them; they sing so well, and have helped on our cause. Then there are the Worthingtons; they have done so much, and are heart and soul for the League. Of course they must come."

"The Bensons, mother? Do you mean the people living at that pretty little place at Cowley?"

"Yes, child. What then?"

There was a little growing asperity in Mrs. Glyde's tone.

"Nothing," said Miss Glyde, hesitating; "but they don't seem at all in the set."

"*In the set!*" said Mrs. Glyde, looking full at her daughter. "Are the Worthingtons in the set, pray?—they are mere no-

bodies, but we can't do without them in the Primrose League. Our other guests will be county people; they know my reason for asking the others, they will know how to behave."

"Of course, dear mother, you know best," said Daisy timidly; "only I think I have heard that the Worthingtons consider themselves a little above the Bensons."

Mrs. Glyde raised her hand.

"Above the Bensons! Can ignorance further go! *Such* people to dare to have such nice distinctions!"

Miss Glyde felt extinguished, and proceeded to write rapidly, while Mrs. Glyde took up her cup of tea once more, still standing in the middle of the drawing-room.

"Oh! mother dear, I forgot to tell you," suddenly said Miss Glyde, looking up from her writing—a glow suffused her face at that moment, making it almost good-looking—"Sir Hugh Falkner is coming to live at the old Hall; he is tired of wandering about the country, and means to settle down."

"Who told you this?" asked Mrs. Glyde sharply.

"I had a letter from Aunt Carrie by this afternoon's post, you know. Sir Hugh is quite at home at the Court—always there, in fact."

"Yes, I know that," said Mrs. Glyde, and deliberately putting her cup down on a table near, she went on: "That is the greatest grievance I have, especially as he is coming to settle in this neighbourhood."

"Grievance!" returned Daisy, opening wide her blue eyes in astonishment.

"Yes; grievance," and Mrs. Glyde, looking at the young innocent face before her, seemed to hesitate for a moment, but only for a moment. She went on: "I suppose you know, Daisy, that though you are a very good little girl, you are by no means pretty, and this neighbourhood is noted for beauty!"

"Oh, I know," said Daisy, laughing gleefully, "but I can't help being plain; and you don't mind very much, do you, mother?"

"No, no, child; but that isn't the question. You have had the start of all the girls about here. From the first, when I heard Sir Hugh was always about the Court, and knew he was not a young man, but was full of all your crotchets about reform and the poor, I must say I hoped and felt that you had a

chance of making the most brilliant match of the neighbourhood. See how it has turned out. He cares nothing at all for you, and no doubt will marry one of the beauties about here. I have no patience with it !”

At the beginning of this tirade a tide of colour swept slowly over Miss Glyde's face, leaving it deadly pale.

“Oh, mother !” was all she said ; but Mrs. Glyde never forgot the look in the girl's face.

“Well, it is no use to be tragic ; but I don't see why you, who are really a good little girl, should die an old maid,” said Mrs. Glyde impatiently.

Daisy recovered herself by a great effort, and said, though her voice shook a little :

“Do you want to get rid of me so badly, mother ? Now, perhaps, I am not of much use, but in years to come, when you won't care to ride after hounds, or go to the coverts with father—I was just going to say, shoot with him,” and a tremulous little smile broke over her face, “then I do hope I shall be a comfort to you.” The tears stood in her eyes as they were raised to her mother's face.

Mrs. Glyde could not resist her.

“You are a dear, good little girl, Daisy, and a comfort now. Still, other women have daughters well married.”

“But mother, look at my two sisters, none could have made better matches in every sense ; what are you thinking of ?”

“They are not my very own children, remember.”

“Yes, yes, they are ; the whole country side said you were a real mother to them ; and then just think of the babies, how delicious they are !”

The slight hardness about Mrs. Glyde's face broke up, and a slow sweet smile flitted over her face.

“Yes, I will give in everything about the babes,” she said. “We just enjoy having them, no responsibility, the mothers and maids have that—they are lovely—but hark ! the first bell is ringing, I must dress.” And gathering her habit over her arm Mrs. Glyde walked out of the room, holding herself with such grace and with so springy a step that they were the admiration and despair of half the county.

“The idea,” said one dumpy young girl, “that a plain woman

like that should dare to have such a figure and such a walk, at her age too!"

Daisy, being already dressed for dinner, settled herself back into her chair with a look of weariness and sorrow, quite foreign to her usual happy expression.

The colour flushed and faded several times in her face, and at last slow tears fell.

So deep in thought was she, that she did not notice the darkening of one of the tall windows, nor a footfall close to her, and started violently and blushed almost as violently when a pleasant voice broke on her ear.

"Daisy! tears! blushes! Don't turn into a modern young lady, pray don't." Her hands were both taken in a firm, kind grasp. "Your father is gone round to the stables, and said I might come in this way."

"I am so glad to see you," said Daisy, raising shy sweet eyes to Sir Hugh Falkner's face; and then, shaking off her nervousness, she went on, "Aunt Carrie has told me all about your coming to settle here. I am so glad."

"Are you, Daisy?"

He looked at her earnestly for a moment, then said:

"I like to be straightforward. It is not only on account of my tenants and to do an Englishman's work in his own place that I am coming home; it is very largely to please myself."

Daisy looked puzzled for a moment, but the second dinner-bell rang and so an end was put to their conversation.

Mrs. Glyde was delighted to see her unexpected guest, but was not encouraged in her hopes by the grave, kind, friendliness of Sir Hugh's manner to Daisy.

CHAPTER II.

A FEW days after this Daisy came into the house from an early walk with eyes and cheeks so bright, that, despite her being plain, she looked a sweet young English girl, healthy, strong and happy.

"Daisy," said Mrs. Glyde, coming hastily out into the hall to meet her daughter, and looking as if the affairs of the whole world rested on her shoulders—Primrose Dames are apt to look

like this before one of their great meetings—"Daisy," she began anxiously, "you did not send off the invitations—merely wrote them?"

"I merely wrote them, mother."

"That is well; we must alter everything now; not the people, I mean, but we must have an evening party before the meeting to talk matters over. The Liberals are making themselves very disagreeable, and I think a plot is brewing to interrupt our great meeting. They are jealous of our success, I suppose, and Jack Chetwynd is at the bottom of it all. I detest that fellow," she went on, with heightened colour and intense bitterness. "In Society, politics and party feeling, are of course put aside, but I will never shake hands with Jack Chetwynd again—never."

"Oh, mother, and you were so fond of Jack!"

"Yes, when he was a generous, high-souled lad, romping about with your brothers and sisters when you were only a mite of a child. He has never been worth anything since he fell in love with Delia, and especially since he has taken up with these Liberal, not to say Radical, ideas. He, the heir to a fine property, it is simply disgusting!"

"But in love with Delia?" said Miss Glyde in an amazed tone.

"Yes, yes, child; but that was long before your time, and won't bear talking about; run away and write your letters." And as the girl obeyed, Mrs. Glyde murmured to herself, "Yes, I detest Jack! I will never hold out a friendly hand to him again."

If Mrs. Glyde could only have seen and heard Jack at that very moment!

He was walking his horse up and down with a friend, outside the great Marden woods, waiting for the hounds to find.

Dressed in scarlet, with the morning sun shining on his clear-cut, handsome features, he looked anything but like a man to be detested. He was saying:

"Wouldn't it be a lark? What a take-down for Madame Glyde—she thinks she can carry all before her. We shall see."

Mr. Hastings laughed and said: "Good fun, Jack, but you must be careful."

"I'll be careful," said Jack, a dark flush crossing his face, "but I owe Mrs. Glyde one."

Meanwhile, Daisy, hanging her hat and jacket on the hat-stand,

turned into the library to write her letters, pondering deeply the while upon Jack Chetwynd's having ever been in love with her sister, Delia.

Delia, the lovely mother of two lovely babes and devoted to her grand, yellow-bearded husband, the thing could never have been, decided Daisy.

The notes of invitation duly arrived at their several destinations. We will only follow the course of two.

The Worthingtons lived at a solid, respectable house, kept a good many servants, and thought a deal of themselves.

They had a delightful family of children, but they were indulged in every whim—and in years to come the parents would find out their folly.

They were kind-hearted people with many excellent qualities, but consumed with the idea of "getting into Society," which by-the-bye they never achieved.

With a pleased smile, Mrs. Worthington selected from her pile of letters the one bearing the Glyde crest and proceeded to open it. She was a rather nice-looking, elegant woman, and the bright look on her face was pretty to see. But, it faded—it darkened—an angry flush rose to her cheek—she threw the letter down.

"Mark, I won't go to the party at all; only fancy, the Bensons are invited, and you may be sure they will go. People like that always clutch at notice from County people."

Be it remarked in passing that Mr. Benson was a distant cousin of the Worthingtons, but, on the strength of having a little more money, they were only friendly with the Benson's in a left-handed sort of way.

"Besides," went on Mrs. Worthington, in a fretful tone of voice, "it is no sort of compliment to us if they are going."

"None at all," said Mr. Worthington, calmly helping himself to some ham, "but then, you see, the Glydes are at perfect liberty to please themselves."

"Yes, but let me see, this is practice night. I'll *snub* the young Bensons, and just let people see we are *not* on the same level."

"So I would," said Mr. Worthington.

He was a very noble-looking man, it seemed impossible that any *littleness* could lurk beneath such an exterior—but it could. He agreed to everything his wife advanced, and was even

prouder, only he did not always like the sound of their spoken thoughts.

Mrs. Worthington was upset for the rest of the day, the servants were tiresome, so were the children, a lovely vase was broken in the drawing-room, and the governess was too strict with her pupils—in short, Mrs. Glyde's letter had a deal to answer for.

The Bensons received their invitation, seated in a pretty, pleasant, dining-room around the breakfast-table.

There were only four of them in family now, the eldest daughter had been exceedingly well married some years ago, and settled in a distant county.

Mr. Benson was a stout, genial man, who mostly looked on the bright side of things, and let people go their own way. He was now trying to eat a hearty breakfast and read his morning paper at the same time.

Let those who have tried this judge how much time he had to spare for his family.

Mrs. Benson was an invalid, fragile and bright-eyed. Bob Benson was a tall, strong young fellow, good-looking and moustached, while his sister was strikingly lovely, tall, fair, with hair like rippling gold.

The young people were eagerly discussing the invitation.

"I vote we don't go," said Bob, helping himself plentifully to marmalade, "the Glydes are much above us."

"Of course they are," replied Carrie Benson, "but oh, mother," turning to her with sparkling eyes, "do let us go, it will be such fun."

"Do you know why you are asked?" said the delicate mother, speaking in a clear, sweet tone of voice.

"Because we can sing a little, I suppose."

"Because you can sing well, both of you, and because you are united in a good cause, with the Glydes and others. I see no objection to your going if your father does not disapprove; you would never presume on such an invitation."

"Never, mother," replied Miss Benson, and turning to her father, at the same time laying one soft little hand on the leader he was grappling with, she said sweetly, "Father dear."

"What's in the wind now?" said Mr. Benson, turning towards them a face surmounted by iron grey hair, which he had managed to ruffle up until it stood on end.

"Oh, you darling old porcupine!" said Miss Benson, kissing him on the forehead and laughing softly.

"No laughing at your old father, Carrie, but come to the point at once," said Mr. Benson, "we are just off."

"Oh, indeed, I will then; we are asked to an evening party at the Glydes, Primrose League affair, you know; may we go?"

"The Glydes! they are several cuts above us, but what does mother say? She always knows."

"She says we may go, dear."

"Very well, then. Bob can take good care of you, I suppose?"

"I should rather think so, sir, very much so, indeed," said Bob, stroking his moustache and smiling a wicked smile.

"Come along then, Bob, we shall be late for the office," and soon the mother and daughter were left alone.

Carrie played with her teaspoon, and presently a vivid colour dawned on her cheek.

"Mother," she said timidly, "do you know Mr. Vivian is coming to stay at the Glydes'—for the evening party probably, certainly for the grand night. They say he will be the great man of the evening and make one of the best speeches."

"Very likely. From all that I hear he is a fine young fellow and represents a great landed interest," said Mrs. Benson calmly. "You have met him often, I think, at your uncle's and brother-in-law's."

"Very often, mother, and we always met as equals."

"So you would do there, Carrie; and of course personally you are entirely his equal, but not in social status in this place. Just think, your father is a merchant and he a great landowner!"

"All the same, my uncle and brother-in-law are in good positions, and they visit as equals; he, of course, thinks we are—that I am, I mean," she said blushing and speaking quickly.

"If he thinks about it at all, dear. But I will put before you the true facts of the case. Your uncle is well-born, and can hold his own; our Susie," how the mother's voice softened over the beloved name—"takes, of course, rank with her husband, but you, my Carrie, take rank from your father, an honest Englishman—God bless him! Would you rather drag on to the misty grandeur of your relations than plant yourself firmly and willingly here, in your proper social status, as your father's own child?"

Carrie's cheeks paled a little, but she kissed her mother gently and said :

"You are right, mother, as you always are. But, Mr. Vivian, how shall I meet him?"

The mother looked steadily at her daughter, and then said :

"Carrie, love, I leave that to you."

* * * * *

The night of the evening party arrived. No efforts had been spared by Mrs. Glyde to make it a brilliant success.

The long, quaint old drawing-room looked beautiful, flooded with soft, yet brilliant light, and perfumed with rare flowers.

At first, with all Mrs. Glyde's exquisite tact she could not get her party to amalgamate. Presently, when the beloved Primrose League would be under discussion, all would thaw, but at present there was a little coldness, and groups gathered here and there, a few being left out in the cold.

Carrie Benson was one of these.

She was seated quite by herself, near a splendid palm, and, in order to hide a little awkwardness, which she could scarcely help feeling, she bent over the lovely plant as if to admire its beauty.

She made an exquisite picture in so doing, in the full light, in her simple white dress, with her straight, clear-cut profile, and her rippling golden hair. Suddenly, from the other side of the room, Mr. Worthington crossed over to Carrie, and with a kind smile, said :

"Isn't that a lovely palm? I prefer palms to ferns, do you?"

Mrs. Worthington could scarcely believe her eyes. Here had she been steadily snubbing the Bensons, and now her husband must needs make it plain, before all these fine folks, that they were on friendly terms.

"Provoking man!" she said to herself. "I'll make him sorry for this."

But she might have forgiven him. Mr. Worthington was not acting just then according to the dictates of his head, but according to his heart—with his head, he agreed to all his wife advanced, and was even prouder than she, but now and again his heart asserted itself. He had come of a good old, genial, kindly stock, and the sight of this girl sitting by herself, touched him.

There came a time, years after, when both remembered this little episode.

Meanwhile, Bob Benson got along swimmingly. He was quite at his ease without being obtrusive, and talked in a very clever, amusing way to Daisy and the Hon. Ethel Thynne; so much so, that the Hon. Ethel afterwards observed, "Why can't the fellows of our set have as much sense as that young Benson?"

Sir Hugh Falkner, leaning against a mantelpiece and watching Daisy's animated face, did not agree with Miss Thynne; on the contrary, he wondered what that fool of a young Benson could have to talk about to make Daisy look so bright.

"Mr. Vivian," announced a servant, and there came into the room a fine-looking young fellow, with a listless expression of face.

Listless, did I say? In turning away from Mrs. Glyde, his eyes chanced to light on Carrie Benson with her cavalier by her side.

Like the sun shining out of a dark cloud came a bright gleam over his face. He was by her side in a moment. "This is an unexpected pleasure," he said. His eyes said far more, and his hand closed with a soft, warm, clasp over the girl's fingers.

She raised sweet, shy eyes to his face, and it would be hard to tell which was the happier.

To Miss Benson's surprise, he seemed to know Mr. Worthington a little, for he said in an indifferent tone, as if speaking from a height.

"Oh! Worthington, how are you?"

To describe the effect of Mr. Vivian's *empressement* towards Carrie, would be impossible.

All the great ladies in the room, and most of the girls, had mentally appropriated this promising young man—and now behold, here was a young woman of no rank at all evidently having had a long start of his equals.

Mrs. Glyde, in her sweetest, most suave manner, said:

"You know Miss Benson?"

"Indeed yes," he answered smiling. "I have had the pleasure of meeting her many times in Yorkshire, at the house of her sister, Mrs. Castleton, and at her uncle's, Mr. Dysart—"

Mrs. Glyde—if I may say so—elevated the eyebrows of her

mind, and all the time she was gliding into a pleasant little conversation with the two, she was thinking over what she had heard.

Well she knew the Dysarts and Castletons of Yorkshire by report.

Fancy a Benson having married into such a family! What a *mésalliance*!

In the course of the evening, certain little reports about the Bensons gently circulated through the room, and they found themselves objects of interest and attention, while the Worthingtons were nowhere.

Such is life, the life of so called country Society.

CHAPTER III.

AT length the evening of the great meeting arrived.

Countless had been the alterations and embellishments of the Town Hall—so called—which stood in the middle of the village street. Lovely and rare flowers had been sent down by the excited and energetic Primrose Dames.

You may be very sure, primroses were the leading flower.

The poor things had been forced for this great event, in many a greenhouse in the neighbourhood, and they resented it by turning out sickly-looking and weak.

In effect they said, "Let me bloom in my native wilds by little streams and mossy banks, and then see how lovely my starry flowers will be."

Groups of Liberals stood about in the streets and laughed and jeered as the flowers were being carried past.

There were no jeers as Mrs. Glyde passed by them. She held herself like an empress, and moreover was so good and full of sympathy for the poor, that there were never any jeers for her.

Jack Chetwynd however was the idol of the village, and it was very astonishing how busy and quiet Jack had been of late. He had also a curious foreign-looking man staying at his house, and both he and this friend—strange to say—seemed to take a deep interest in the decorations of the Hall.

Once indeed, lights were said to be shining in the Hall at night, and old Dr. Ramsay affirmed that at one o'clock in the

morning, as he was returning home from a bad case, Jack—or else his double—flew out of the Town Hall, and the two coming into collision, Jack knocked the respectable Dr. Ramsay clean into the gutter without even an apology. Jack never owned to this, and Dr. Ramsay always wound up by saying: "From no other man in England would I take such an insult."

"Don't let any quarrelsome Liberals in," said Mr. Glyde in a low tone to one of his subordinates as he was entering the Hall the next night. "Do the best you can, the room is getting crammed now."

"Yes, sir, and there are so many Liberals standing about outside. Mr. Jack Chetwynd is here, with Mr. Hastings and the Ponsonbys, and that queer-looking foreigner."

An uneasy flush crossed Mr. Glyde's face, but he passed on.

The Hall filled to overflowing, there was not even standing room.

Places in front had been reserved for Mrs. Glyde's bevy of fair Primrose Dames—"The Glydes' Own"—as Jack always called them. They entered presently and there was much fluttering of fans and rustling of dresses ere silence reigned. When all was quiet, Mr. Glyde as chairman rose to open the proceedings.

He made a very good speech, and was not interrupted. There were occasional cries, and questions, from the back of the room, but on the whole tolerable order prevailed, and this was kept up through the two or three speeches which followed.

At length General Slocombe rose to address the meeting, and this seemed the signal, for one gentleman on the platform to make notes, another to stretch himself out, a third to close his eyes, and so on.

General Slocombe must be conciliated, but his speech was always an infliction—to friends and foes alike. He was an old man, long and straight-backed, very stupid and very florid, a bachelor, and likely to remain one. On being called upon, he always rose very stiffly to respond, and never moved two feet from the chair he invariably occupied on that platform, at these Primrose meetings.

He began in his usual sing-song style, making stale Primrose jokes, that were voted a bore even by his own party.

It was noticed that just over him hung a very large medallion of a rather curious shape, and plentifully besprinkled with primroses.

Suddenly, in the middle of his speech—how shall I describe what took place?—something seemed to fall from the ceiling like a flash of lightning, and in an instant General Slocombe was enveloped, in what looked like a transparent extinguisher.

It seemed very flimsy and slight, but though the General kicked and shouted most lustily, he was a complete prisoner *in an "extinguisher."*

You may be very sure all the facts he had been laboriously storing up in his brain, bearing on his beloved Primrose League died out of his mind. In his inmost soul he groaned, "Let Primroses or Liberals prevail, I don't care a rap which, so that I get out of this cursed cage."

Meanwhile, the din, the shouts, the confusion, in the room were indescribable and deafening. But 'mid all the uproar, Mrs. Glyde heard a voice from the back of the room, shouting, "The primroses caught him," and while the gentlemen flew to General Slocombe, trying to release him, Mrs. Glyde saw with horror that the "extinguisher" was covered with primroses.

"This is too horrible," said Mrs. Glyde shuddering. "I shall never survive this disgrace."

But much worse was to follow.

In the frantic efforts of his friends to free the General, a small table, which unhappily bore a lamp, was dashed to the ground and set fire to some of the decorations.

At the instant of the crash of the table, the tall, foreign-looking man, rushed on the platform and freed General Slocombe by a touch.

Some minutes before, as if divining what would follow, Sir Hugh Falkner had rushed forward, caught Daisy up in his arms and carried her to a place of safety, and was back again to give the alarm and help to release the people.

The Hall presented a frightful picture, Liberals and Primroses united in one common terror!

The flames spread!

All comic element died out, and deep and deadly peril took its place. Gone was the light laughter from young lips, as, with wild, affrighted eyes, there was a rush made to the one door, and as the danger increased, screams and groans and prayers, yes, wild, earnest prayers, broke forth from lips that ten minutes before would have scorned even to own that there was a God.

The din and awful madness increased; one or two were trampled down at the door.

Suddenly, in a voice of thunder, Jack Chetwynd's voice was heard above the Babel of sounds.

"Stand back, stand back, for God's sake," he shouted; "don't press round the door, the weak will be trampled to death. You shall all be saved. There is some boarding on this side of the room, an army of men on the outside, are cutting it away. Don't you hear the sound of their strokes?"

Across the room he caught a glimpse of Bob Benson's resolute young face.

"Benson," he shouted, "help me to keep order; the weak will be trampled to death."

Bob *did* help—first seeing that Mr. Vivian was taking care of Carrie—and if ever two grimy heroes walked on the face of this earth that night, Jack Chetwynd and Bob Benson were the men.

And how fared it with Mrs. Glyde?

She was no coward; but her mind was in a whirl.

Certain great questions which must be met by everyone of us, either in life or death, poured in upon her soul. Where was now her pride of birth? Where was now her social status? Where was her beloved Primrose League? All shrivelled into nothingness. Through the sea of faces she caught sight of Jack Chetwynd, and, holding out both hands—those hands that were never to clasp his again—she called in piteous entreaty:

"Oh, Jack, Jack!"

He saw the outstretched hands.

He knew her peril, as a corner of her dress ignited. Delia's mother! She shall be the first saved, was Jack's thought, and wrapping her in his own coat, as the boarding fell away, and the blessed night air poured into the heated room, Delia's mother was indeed one of the first, carried through the opening.

Finally they were all saved, though for weeks and weeks many lives were despaired of.

Jack Chetwynd's first and foremost.

He had given himself for the Rippington people that night, taking his life in his hand, and he was a complete wreck.

The once handsome Jack would go scarred to his grave, but beloved as he had been before, he and his scars became doubly dear to the heart of every Rippingtonian.

He had few near relatives, and Mrs. Glyde helped to nurse him, with tenderness and tact, and it soon became plain that he liked to have her about him.

It was quite two months before Jack could be freely talked with, but then Mrs. Glyde, solemnly kissing him on the forehead, said :

“Jack, you saved my life.”

And he, looking her full in the face, said :

“You would not let me have Delia.”

“No ; for that you must forgive me ; but I mean to find you a splendid wife, Jack.”

Jack did not say what he then sincerely thought, that no other woman could be to him what Delia once was. He did not say how he sat and watched her lovely face in church, when she happened to be staying at the Glydes', and longed to punch her husband's head.

No, he wisely kept all these thoughts to himself, and there came a time when he could even afford to smile at them.

Bob Benson found himself a hero also, and many were the girls who set caps at the gallant Bob.

There were a few feeble enquiries made as to the origin of the fire, but by common consent, these enquiries died away, and as soon as Jack was convalescent he interested himself in the construction of a beautiful new Town Hall, which he presented to the large village, or town, of Rippington.

You will thus see Mr. Jack Chetwynd paid very dearly for his “lark.” He lost a round sum of money, all his good looks, and what had he gained ?

About two months after the fire, the Bensons were gathered in their drawing-room in the twilight, waiting for the dinner-bell to ring.

Mr. Benson was asleep in his easy chair, Mrs. Benson lying on a little couch on the opposite side of the fire, and in the middle sat Bob, stroking his moustache and wanting his dinner.

Presently Mr. Benson roused himself and asked :

“Where is my little Carrie ?”

“Your little Carrie has something to tell you, father,” said Mrs. Benson in her sweet voice.

“Something good then, I hope, for our confounded business

seems to me slack. If there were not Carrie to provide for, mother, you and I would go away into the country, and I would take up my hobby of gardening. Bob could have the business, he says it will work all right."

"Yes," said Bob, "I can pull it together, young blood and all that," and he smiled his sauciest smile.

"To say nothing of your growing popularity, Bob," said his mother, with a fond smile.

"I hear what you are all talking about," said a soft voice out of the gloom, and coming into the fire-light, Carrie put both arms round her father's neck and said :

"Prepare yourself for a most wonderful surprise, I am actually engaged to Mr. Vivian; he is coming to speak to you to-morrow!"

Mr. Benson sat upright in his excitement.

"Vivian? You can't mean it! Did ever a man in my position have two such sons-in-law as Castleton and Vivian? Why, mother, I must brush up my manners."

"You must just be *yourself*, dear," said his wife, looking at him with eyes dim with happy tears. "Bob shall have the business, we will settle near Carrie, father, and you shall do gardening to your heart's content."

About a week after this, on a cold, bright, Spring morning, Mrs. Glyde might have been seen, coming through one of the shrubberies, towards her house.

She was pondering many things deeply, that morning, and started, when she felt her husband's hand upon her shoulder——

"Give me the benefit of your thoughts, Louisa?"

"I was thinking of that wretched meeting—but it did me good—I have been a better woman, Walter, from that night."

"There was no need," said Mr. Glyde, kicking the gravel about with his toe. "You were good enough for me."

She looked up at him with that slow, sweet, smile, which she only gave to husband or children, but she felt a little stab at her heart at his boundless trust in her. "Well," she went on, "that dreadful meeting seems likely to be the means of making the most unequal marriages—witness, Miss Benson and Vivian, and now to-day I hear Ethel Thynne is engaged to that stupid Captain

Leicester, simply because he flew about after Jack, and young Benson, the night of the fire, backing up their gallant efforts."

"Louisa, can you bear one more blow?" asked Mr. Glyde.

"Not one, Walter, not one."

"Still you must know, my dear, some time, Sir Hugh Falkner *is engaged to be married!*"

Mrs. Glyde dropped into one of the garden chairs.

"And worse," continued Mr. Glyde, "he is at the present moment in the drawing-room, waiting for you to congratulate him."

"This is a drop too much, Walter. I shall go to bed."

"No you won't; the first lady in the county as to manners shirking her social duties! Come, Louisa, it can't be thought of."

And she went, he looking after her with a curious smile.

As she entered the drawing-room, she heard Daisy's fresh young voice saying:

"Mother is so fond of you, she will be so glad."

And there was Daisy with her cheek lightly laid against Sir Hugh's shoulder, and behold! it was her own dear little Daisy to whom Sir Hugh was engaged. After all, what a happy morning for Mrs. Glyde! What lovely fruition to all her hopes.

* * * * *

Several years after, at a large garden party, given by one of the great ladies of the neighbourhood, viz., Lady Falkner, Mr. Jack Chetwynd was there, with his pretty young bride.

"Oh, Jack, what a lovely woman," said little Mrs. Jack, pressing her husband's arm.

He followed the direction of her eyes, and saw—Delia! Yes, *Delia*; and saw her with a tranquil smile.

"She was my first love, dear," he said gently, "but you are my last, and best."

Just then Mrs. Glyde came towards them with both hands extended, and with a happy smile.

"I have been slipping away to see the nursery pets," she said, "I did not know you had arrived; let me take you to Daisy. It is so amusing to see the child, with her little dignified air, receiving so many guests."

It is bright sunshine now with Mrs. Glyde. In the course of years shadows must fall.

We will leave her in the sunshine.

Jean Paul.

By L. E. TIDDEMAN.

THE season of Spring and the great and prolific prose-poet, Jean Paul Friedrich Richter, were, to use his own words, born together. On the 21st of March, 1763, at Wunsiedel, a village nestling in the bosom of the Fichtelgebirge (Pine Mountains), his infant eyes first opened upon the troublous world in which he was destined to bear his part so bravely. His father occupied a humble position, combining the occupations of schoolmaster and organist, but in 1765 he was preferred to the pastorate of Joditz. His poverty was equalled by his piety, and he contrived to gain the love and respect of all who knew him.

"What is poverty that a man should writhe under it? It is but like piercing the ears of a maiden, and you hang precious jewels in the wound."

These are the words of his son, the subject of our sketch, and it will be acknowledged by all who are familiar with his history that he did not speak without book. His own writings have familiarised us with the humble surroundings of his childhood. We see the wooden, straw-thatched house, sheltering not human beings alone, but all kinds of domestic animals, the stove of polished china flanking the entrance (a familiar object even in the poorest household), the wooden benches round the walls kept scrupulously clean by constant washing, the tiled floor, the cooking utensils, and above the door the old be-thumbed Bible and other devotional works, reposing on a separate shelf.

In a *ménage* so simple as this, however large the family but one living room was possible, but, between the stove and the wall, a tiny apartment was sometimes partitioned off for the convenience of those who craved for solitude or repose, and another allotted to the heads of the household to accommodate their bed, together with an elaborately-carved chest in which were deposited the family linen, jewellery, and important documents.

The cooing of the doves in the high, circular dove-cote at the rear of the house, reaches our ears, and the scent of lavender and

other fragrant shrubs fills our nostrils, whilst our eyes feast themselves upon the rural scene without, enlivened by the picturesque figures of the passing villagers. In such a limited sphere as this did Jean Paul Friedrich Richter pass his early days, and he does not hesitate to congratulate himself upon the fact.

"Let no poet," he says, "*suffer himself* to be born or educated in a metropolis, but if possible in a hamlet, at the highest in a village. . . . He must in the city draw about the warm zone of the friends and acquaintances of his parents, the greater and colder number from the icy circle of unloved persons, who meet and pass him with the same indifference that a ship's company on the great ocean meet and pass another ship freighted with those they do not love. But in the village they love all the inhabitants, and not a nursling is there buried but everyone knows its name and illness, and the tears it has cost."

Under these influences Richter grew from childhood to youth, from youth to manhood, with an eye open to all beauty, moral and physical, and undimmed by conventionalism, and a nimble fancy that clothed the most prosaic incidents of every-day life with sweetest poetry. It is with something akin to rapture that he dwells upon the simple details of his childhood, ignoring in poet fashion all that is unlovely. To the mind capable of transporting itself at will to another scene and bridging the space of a century, the picture he draws is full of charm. Winter was hailed by the Richter family with delight, bringing "a climax of joys," for at that season the father deserted his study, and dwelt in the common living-room, surrounded by his family, often busily occupied in committing his Sunday sermon to memory, undisturbed by the stir and bustle around him. In his well-known novel, "Flower, Fruit and Thorn Pieces," a humorous description is given of literary work conducted under similar conditions, and we realise that the picture is drawn from life, while we smile at each elaborate detail. From Joditz the family removed to Schwarzenbach, Jean Paul being then thirteen years of age, and here the shadow of previously-contracted debts brooded over his father, and saddened the lad's sensitive spirit. Here too he had increased opportunity of indulging his insatiable love for reading, having free access to the extensive library of a young chaplain who had constituted

himself his instructor. Patiently, and with a wisdom far in advance of his years, he filled large quarto volumes with extracts from works on philosophy, theology, natural history, medicine, poetry and jurisprudence. His thirst for knowledge was at this period so intense, and he crowded his mind with facts to such an extent, that he left but little room for the play of his creative genius, deceiving himself into the idea that he was born for a philosopher rather than a poet. At the age of sixteen Jean Paul was entered at the Gymnasium in the little city of Hof, a year later his father died, and in his capacity of eldest son there devolved upon the youth the care of his mother. This was no sinecure's office, for tenderly as Jean Paul speaks of her, it is but too evident that she was a weak-minded woman, ready to take advantage of his self-sacrificing love, and averse to following his advice, however judiciously given. It is pleasant to note the friendships formed at this date by the young enthusiast; they served to sweeten an existence which might otherwise have been tinged with bitterness, and lent a touch of romance to the prosaic details of school life.

Taking little with him save his poverty, his genius, and his noble resolutions, Richter matriculated at the Leipsic University on the 19th of May, 1781. It is touching to note how he forced himself to a course of study in many ways distasteful to him, for the sake, as he himself allows, of his mother, whose mind was set upon his becoming a minister. It was not without a severe heart-struggle that he decided eventually upon the career of literature, and in doing so he was moved, not only by the genius within him which clamoured for utterance, but also by the unselfish desire to assist his mother. The first work produced by the tender-souled poet was a satire, "The Eulogy of Stupidity." An extract, from a letter to a friend who had the honour of reading this work in manuscript, will give an idea of the independence of character which restrained him from seeking patronage.

"God," he says, "has denied me four feet to enable me to look up for the favourable glance of a patron, and creep for a few crumbs from his superfluity. I can neither be a false flatterer nor a fashionable fool, nor win friends by the motion of my tongue and the bending of my knee."

"The Eulogy of Stupidity" was followed by a volume of

essays entitled "The Greenland Lawsuits." These were also satirical in character, and were written while poverty stared the author in the face, and the gaunt hand of hunger rested on his shoulder. Yet the "brilliant wit" of which De Quincey speaks illumines every page, and a wealth of illustration lends charm to themes which might otherwise fail to please. It must be owned that his experience at this time was so limited that he must perforce have written of scenes which his eyes had never beheld, and pictured, albeit graphically, *dramatis personæ* who were but creatures of a far-seeing fancy. This being the case, we can but wonder at the genius which made so difficult a task not only possible but, to all seeming, easy. It does not require great imagination to picture Richter at this date as he appeared when issuing from his limited study to breathe the fresh air of Heaven. He was, we are told, slight in figure and of a fair complexion; his blue eyes, mild in expression, could yet burn with the fever of enthusiasm, and his blonde hair, destitute of powder, was shorter than was in accordance with the fashion of the day. He wore a shirt cut low and open at the breast, a loose green coat and a straw hat.

"My hair also I have had cut. It is pronounced by my friends more becoming, and it spares me the expense of the hairdresser. I have still some locks a little curled," writes Jean Paul to his mother.

Poverty, that hardest of all taskmasters, drove Richter from Leipsic, and enforced upon him a residence at Hof, under the same roof that sheltered his mother. But from the riches of Friendship Poverty cannot exclude us, and it was Richter's good fortune to secure for life that of Christian Otto, the preacher's son, to whom in fullest confidence he entrusted all he wrote, not disdaining but rather inviting criticism.

It was to another friend that Richter owed a change in his mode of life, and an increase to his narrow means. His college companion, Von Oerthel, suggested that he should undertake the duties of instructor to his younger brother, and Jean Paul repaired to Topen, where his experiences were far from agreeable, although he remained there for nearly three years. On his return to Hof, he was altered in appearance as well as feeling, having consented to a change of costume, involving the binding of his curling hair into a *queue*. This made admission into

society more easy, which fact Richter had doubtless taken into consideration, finding it necessary to study the ways of men in order to portray their characters more conscientiously. His own nature expanded by intercourse with his fellows, his manner in society left nothing to desire, being stamped by that hallmark of good-breeding—an entire freedom from self-consciousness. Nor did he lack accomplishments, for he inherited his father's taste for music, and was wont to enrapture his hearers by quaint improvisations upon the harpsichord or piano.

It is odd to picture Richter in the capacity of pedagogue, yet, complying with the desire of a friend, he gathered about him in Schwarzenbach seven pupils (including one girl), whose ages varied from fourteen to six. For five hours each day he devoted himself to their instruction, endeavouring by methods entirely his own to educate them in the true sense of the word, and gaining the love not only of the children but also of their relatives. In his book "*Levana*" he has striven to set forth his method of education. To the future poet or author it was doubtless invaluable, but it would not have proved serviceable to those destined for mercantile pursuits.

It is not surprising that women, whose cause he always championed so warmly, should be drawn towards him. This was indeed the case throughout his life. He treated them as equals (a new departure in his time), yet showed in his manner that the sense of equality did not preclude a tender reverence that is to be traced throughout his writings.

His first literary success was gained by a romance bearing the curious title of "*The Invisible Lodge*," and the gold he earned by this he placed in his mother's hands with feelings of joy, which he alone had the power to describe. The fame he gained moved him to fresh endeavour, and his school duties occupying so much of his time, he found himself compelled to borrow hours from those intended for repose, in order, with fleetest pen, to commit his glowing fancies to paper. The reader must study "*Hesperus*" to judge of his success, and having given the book his careful consideration, it is probable that his feelings of admiration will disarm criticism. "*Hesperus*" was embodied in four volumes, and for these Richter received 200 dollars, on the strength of which he gave up teaching for a while, only to find himself compelled to resume it once more, this time with girls only

as his pupils. He worked contentedly, though "compelled, like the bird, to learn to sing in a darkened cage," feasting, meanwhile, upon the admiration now so freely vouchsafed to him, and warming himself in the sunshine of the affection of his friends. The summer of 1794 saw him in Bayreuth, the guest of a Jewish merchant, Emanuel, and surrounded by unaccustomed elegance and luxury, which he appreciated with all the force of an artistic nature. "In Bayreuth," he writes, "my moments were roses, and my hours polished brilliants." This letter is dated July, 1795, and the close of the following year was marked by the appearance of the well-known "Flower, Fruit and Thorn Pieces." The hero in this work, as indeed all the characters, is of humble origin, and the history of his married life is a strange mixture of realism and poetry, while throughout the whole we detect the undercurrent of satire which marks all his works. 'We must not take it ill in him," he says, when speaking of the indigent advocate, "that he pays his debts, when we consider that he is of mean, or rather of no extraction. From a man of rank we may justly expect that he will act more becomingly, and not pay his debts at all."

"Upon the female soul as well as upon the female body is bound an eternal corset."

This is Jean Paul's protest against the conventionality by which the weaker sex is trammelled, yet it must be confessed that many of his lady admirers, and their name was legion, made bold to throw off all restriction, and address him in terms of open admiration while he was yet a stranger to them. Through Madame Von Kalb, one of his female devotees, Jean Paul gained an *entrée* into the first circles in Weimar, and made the acquaintance of Goethe, Herder, and other celebrities. He speaks of his life here as "joy-intoxicated," and truly he had his share of the admiration so dear to the sensitive soul of the author. Yet it was well for him that he at length mustered courage to close the intimacy with Madame Von Kalb, which had in it elements of danger, and to resume his quiet life under the same humble roof that sheltered his mother, turning all his energies to the pursuance of his literary career. It was a lasting regret to him that he should, owing to failing health, be absent from home when his mother died, and he dwelt with pain upon the memory of the sorrows she had endured, although he

could not but realise that he had done his utmost to assuage them.

It was not unnatural that Jean Paul should, after this domestic bereavement, leave Hof and seek new pastures, wherein his genius should have wider play and his experiences become more varied. He chose Leipsic as his place of residence, and conceived soon after his arrival a romantic admiration for a certain Emilie von Berlepsch, an author like himself, and if we are to take Richter's opinion, possessed of all the acquirements essential to her profession. It has been said, "that whoever writes the life of Jean Paul must not forget how much influence women exercised upon his destiny." This remark may be applied to other and less distinguished lives, but few men have gained so readily, almost without effort, the devotion of women, and it needs a Richter to express his feelings with such freedom and simplicity.

"I celebrated my birthday on the 20th, on account of the birth of the spring, and on the 21st on account of my own birth. From an unknown hand I received brown cloth that I already doubly wear, as a coat, and an overcoat for the winter. Madame Feind gave me a cup with her and my initial letters interlaced; Madame Bruningt, a neck-cloth; and the Berlepsch made a little festival, with rose-trees, crowns, etc."

Yet it was not Emilie von Berlepsch who became the wife of Richter. "I told Emilie that I felt no passion for her, and that it would be impossible for us to live happily together." These are his own words, and they must have fallen sadly enough upon the ears of his listener, who, however, eventually found one who could appreciate her more fully.

In 1798 Richter deserted Leipsic and repaired to Weimar, and shared the home of Herder, enjoying close companionship with a kindred spirit, and resisting the attractions of Madame von Kalb, in whose company he was again thrown.

It was not until he reached the age of thirty-seven that Jean Paul met his fate—Caroline Meyer, daughter of a Privy Councillor, in Berlin. In speaking of her he says, "I wish I could hang my heart as a golden ornament over hers; I would draw it out of my breast." And again, "She has the beauty rare among Germans, of a dark, soft eye and Madonna brow."

These words are impassioned, but they were not contradicted

by any neglect of the duties of a husband. Caroline's letters and the testimony of each biographer point to the fact that perfect unity prevailed throughout the married life of this well-assorted pair.

"No female nature could have resisted Paul," says one who knew him well; "it is gratifying to know that his wife proved no exception to the rule."

"My husband is perpetually satisfied with all as it is," she writes out of the fulness of her heart, "and I form myself so willingly after his wishes that in my heart I feel the intimate and sweet conviction that I can be to him all that he needs, etc., etc."

To souls so closely bound God vouchsafed one more connecting link, forged of fairest gold. A child was born to them, or, to use the poet's own words, "a god-like little daughter, with the blue eyes wide open, a beautiful high brow, kiss-lipped, heart-touching, and with the little nose of my Caroline."

Simultaneously with this crown to domestic bliss, Richter finished the work of ten long years, and gave to the world the last volume of "Titan." It met with much adverse criticism, in spite of the genius that is traceable in every line, and which all must recognise. To appreciate it to the full it should be read in the original, but this remark applies also to all the works of Richter, which are essentially German. Great discontent was evinced by the public with regard to the fate of the heroine, and the author was besieged with letters begging him to alter it. The general feeling was one of disappointment, amounting in many cases to indignation. It is reported by one biographer that had Richter lived a few years longer, important alterations would have been made in this great work. There are many who still deplore the existence of certain passages, which in their judgment are blots on a fair landscape, but it is a noticeable fact that "Titan" has outlived criticism, and is acknowledged by all to be a work of undoubted genius, full of beauty, and breathing the loftiest sentiments.

The work that followed, the "Flegeljahre," contains much of his personal history. Carlyle translates the word *Flegeljahre* as "wild oats," but many of us would be content with giving to it the same meaning as is conveyed by a similar word, "Wanderjahre," or "apprenticeship," as *em* loved by Goethe in "Meister."

In this book the poet lays bare the secrets of his pure soul, with all its joys, hopes, sorrows and longings. It is a strange romance of the most exquisite beauty and tenderness, and as a work of art may be esteemed faultless.

As he wrote Richter's heart swelled with the desire to visit once more his childhood's haunts, and therefore, with 'wife, child and hound,' he established himself at Bayreuth, at the foot of the Fichtelgebirge. Here his eyes could satisfy themselves with prolonged gazing upon the mist-wrapped mountains, and his soul find daily comfort in intercourse with dear and familiar friends. This was his last earthly home, and here, in the upper room of a peasant's cottage, not far from his own residence, he provided himself with a study, furnished in accordance with his simple taste, wherein he sought refuge if the weather proved uncongenial. At other times he mused beneath the canopy of Heaven, bearing in his hand a trusty staff and upon his shoulders a bag of books. In the tranquillity of middle life he had leisure to look forth from his sequestered retreat, and contemplate the effect his own works had produced upon others; the calm that had settled upon him influenced his writings, and even his personal appearance was altered.

"He had hitherto been pale and lean," we are told, "he now became stout and robust; and had it not been that the delicately-formed nose, the lovely mouth, the intellectual brow and lightning eye, remained unchanged, he would have been taken for a farmer rather than a poet."

His nephew, who was a frequent visitor, speaks of him in glowing terms, extolling his wit, good humour and childlike purity of heart. "The father was good to everything," he says; "he could not bear to witness the least pain even in the lowest animal."

"In the twilight he told us stories, or spake of God and other worlds, etc., etc."

His book "*Levana*," to which allusion has already been made, appeared in 1807, and was preceded by the "*Introduction to Æsthetics*."

It is hard to realise that one who wrote so untiringly, and whose efforts were so well received, should have suffered from monetary difficulties, yet such was the case, and the fact spurring him to almost superhuman exertion, it is not surprising to learn

that his health gave way. A tertian ague reached his weakened body, yet, such was his perseverance, that when on every third day he felt himself unable to write, he "read philosophy, and was able to forget the ague fit when the shaking would permit him to hold the book."

It was a Prince (Carl von Dalberg, Prince Primate of the Confederation of the Rhine), to whom Richter was indebted for a pension of 1,000 gulden. It is sad to think that our author should have found it necessary to hint at his own poverty in a dedication address, for truly genius should not be condemned to stoop for daily bread.

After this act of generosity life became more easy, and it was even possible for Jean Paul to indulge, albeit to a limited extent, his taste for travel. That he committed no needless extravagance is very clear.

"I deny myself my vesper meal merely to work."

"I have held it my duty not to enjoy or to gain, but to write."

These are his own sentiments, the testimony of others confirms them, and adds fresh beauty to the simple statements.

At Heidelberg he received the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, and of this he gives a description full of *naïveté* finding it as he himself says, difficult to "paint the love and esteem" with which he was received. "The dog, even if he could speak, would tell you he had never been so well fed, and from such beautiful hands."

Upon his happy life there fell at this period the heaviest of all shadows, that of death; his son Max died of a nervous fever at the age of nineteen, a victim to over-study, and the sorrowing father wept to the injury of his own sight.

Spring, the season of his birth, found him still grieving, and yielding to the solicitations of his friends, he journeyed to Dresden in search of health and distraction. Here he spent five weeks in privacy, avoiding all excitement, and seeking the companionship of intimate friends only. It was during this visit that he made the discovery that he had already partially lost the sight of his left eye, and that that of the other was threatened. He did not at first realise that his case was hopeless, and lost no time in consulting the best oculists of the day, but in spite of all their efforts the light faded slowly and surely from the clear blue eyes which had once been interpreters of their owner's pure soul.

"I firmly believe God will send me, even in this extremity, only what is best to me!"

Thus he wrote to his wife, with uncertain pen, while the lines became confused, and a mist dimmed his sight; thus he faced a trial beneath which most men would have cowered.

His last work, "*Selina*," treating of the immortality of the soul, was doomed to remain unfinished, although his nephew responded to his call, and would willingly have assisted in its completion. He describes his feelings on visiting the "immortal old man," at the twilight hour, and draws for us a pleasant picture of his surroundings, "the writing-table, upon which appeared a regular confusion of pens, paper of all colours, glasses, flowers, books, the little canary with her young, the white, silky-haired poodle," etc., etc.

Of Richter himself he speaks with utmost reverence. "The robust form that in former years, even before the snowdrop had loosened the icy crust of winter, had worked long hours, with uncovered breast in the open air, lay supported with cushions, and shrouded in furs upon the sofa; his body drawn together, and eyes for ever closed."

With his nephew's help, and revived by his presence, Jean Paul began a revision of the new edition of his works. A pleasant task for one whose literary record was blameless, and who had been the champion of virtue. But to complete "*Selina*" was impossible; day by day he became more feeble, yet though racked by bodily pain, he did not cease to show interest in the joys and sorrows of others. His voice had become almost inaudible from excessive weakness, and his devoted wife knelt by his sofa to catch his lightest accents. A week before his death sight failed entirely, and once, in an access of despair, he uttered the words of Ajax:

"If we must perish, we Thy will obey,
But let us perish in the light of day."

His death was as beautiful as his life had been, and his friends sat in silence around his bed. One is tempted to misquote the poet's lines, and to say:

"Their very hopes belied their fears,
Their fears their hopes belied;
They thought him dying when he slept,
And sleeping when he died."

So peacefully did he pass away.

It needed the words of the physician in attendance to convince the anxious watchers that the end had come.

"That is death," he said.

Truly the flickering breath had ceased, the noble heart throbbed no longer, the weary limbs were at rest. But the name of Richter lives for ever, and the words sung by students at his torchlit funeral ring in our ears :

"Thou shalt arise, my Soul !"

They bore his coffin to its last resting-place, his unfinished manuscript laid reverently upon it. Had they turned the leaves over they would have come upon these words, with which we close our sketch :

"Life departs not *from* the soul, but *in* the soul. It lays its organic sceptre down, and dismisses the world that hitherto served it, or rather, it abandons its empire."

They were the last he ever penned.

Robin Hood.

A LEAFY Warwickshire lane in the warm June weather, when dog-roses bloom everywhere, and the air is sweet with a thousand summer scents. Robin Hood stood there in a glory of sunlight—a bright, handsome, sixteen-year-old lad, with a poet's eyes of deepest brown, and a lithe young form that had a lissom grace all its own. He stood leaning idly against a gate, and a song bubbled up to his lips and floated out on the still morning air. It was a fragment of "The Stirrup Cup" that he sang, sang it clear and true, in rich boyish tones, that silenced the birds for a space and won him an unknown listener.

"Thanks—so many! I could not help hearing!" said a low, musical voice at his side; and a girl stepped through the gate into the lane, smiling gaily up at him as he stood blushing in his bewilderment and surprise. "Forgive me!" she went on with charming contrition in face and voice. "You sang so clearly and never thought of me coming. Besides, I liked your song, and now—I suppose you will not sing any more?"

"Not to you," the boy laughed merrily, and the laugh robbed his refusal of all curtness. "Isn't it a grand morning, and can anything surpass a Warwickshire lane in early June?"

His shyness had vanished; he could gaze and gaze at the exquisite vision before him without feeling embarrassment at her presence—a slender girlish form in a soft white dress that was different to any dress he had ever seen before, and a face—oh! the radiant loveliness of that sweet *riante* face above which the bright curls rippled tenderly, enhancing the vivid forget-me-not blue of the eyes which smiled beneath. As he saw it thus in the fair morning sunshine so Robin Hood remembered it till the day that he died. The smiling eyes beneath their thick dark fringes, the rosy lips, the gold-brown, rippling hair, they haunted him through many a long, long day when this summer hour was but a memory, and he had learnt many things.

She laughed at his enthusiasm, albeit her glance around was fully as appreciative as his own.

"Perhaps," she said. "For my part I can breathe better in town, although it is treason to say so—here. But you—you look like a country lad, I think. Will you tell me your name, and also my nearest road back to Knollbrooke? I have lost my way I fancy."

"My name is Robin Hood."

"Really!" raising her delicate brows. "What a pretty, romantic name! How I wonder what you will make of it, Robin? And you live here, you say, in this sweet Arcadia?"

"See there," said the boy with a wave of his sunburnt hand, "you can catch a glimpse of our gables through the plantation trees. My grandfather is General Hood, of the Towers, and I am his nearest relative and heir. But you—what is your name?"

She smiled again at his simplicity. "I am Cecil."

"Cecil!" repeated Robin slowly. "Only Cecil! Ah, I see, you will not tell me more."

"Is it not enough?" reproachfully, for his clear eyes rebuked her. "Perhaps if I told you more you would like me less. It is usually so, believe me. Yes, I am Cecil, and this is my holiday. My last holiday—before——"

"Before?"

"Hush! I was only dreaming," cried the girl, with a merry laugh. "My whole life is but a holiday so some folks say. And yet I had a fancy for a month down in this Midland wilderness, with the birds and roses for company. Such a profusion of roses, too! Robin Hood, will you gather me some before I go?"

He obeyed. When his task was finished, and he had pointed out the nearest road to Knollbrooke, she paused, holding out her hand.

"Must you go?" asked Robin, eagerly. "I was just going to tell you what my life will be when I am older, you know. I am going to be a soldier."

"A soldier!" said Cecil, dreamily; her blue eyes softening involuntarily as they rested on his bright young face. "Ah! that is grand! You will make a good soldier, but of course that is all in the future. You are very young yet."

Robin's laugh ended in a blush. "I am sixteen."

Cecil's pretty lip trembled. "Sixteen! Oh! happy boy! Robin Hood, I am bitterly jealous. If I stay here longer I shall be filled with discontent at my unfortunate lot. And yet—I wonder what you would think of it, the gay, changeful existence of a London butterfly."

"I should fly away," replied Robin Hood boldly; and something in his clear, compassionate gaze, something in the honest ring of his boyish tones, thrilled Cecil's heart and saddened her. "If you are staying long in the neighbourhood," he continued eagerly, "perhaps I shall see you again. Surely you are not leaving just yet—"

"I shall see you again," assented the girl impatiently. "Didn't I tell you that I am staying a fortnight longer? And I shall probably see you many times again. I might, possibly, come and storm that rural citadel of yours and make acquaintance with the General. Shall I, Robin Hood?"

"Do," he laughed blithely. "I only wish you would. Are you going now? You will not forget the way, and see—you are dropping the roses."

"Poor roses!" Cecil gathered them together and stuck them carelessly in her belt. "Good-bye," she said, "or rather *au revoir*, for I fancy we shall meet again. Forgive me for breaking in on your song so ruthlessly a while ago. You can finish it now, you know."

But he did not. He sat on the gate one half-hour longer; and presently an old woman came by.

"Good morning, Master Robin," she said. "Did ye happen to see that young Madam from Knollbrooke in her grand white gown? Maybe you saw her pass this way?"

"Aye, I did," responded Robin promptly. "Can you tell me her name, Mrs. Susan, for she's an utter stranger to me?"

"Her name!" cried the dame in horrified tones. "To think as ye can sit there and say as ye've never heard tell of the London beauty as is turning folks' heads down at Knollbrooke? Why hers my Lady Armine, and to my mind it's a pity as my lord ain't down here to look after his property. Leastways folks say——"

"Lady Armine! Cecil, Lady Armine!" Robin gave the woman a careless nod, and walked swiftly homewards. So youthful, so pretty, and yet Lady Armine! Where had he

heard that name before, and why had Susan spoken in such disparaging tones of the beautiful girl who had chatted with him so graciously only half-an-hour before? "She is a beauty," said Robin Hood to himself. "A real beauty and no mistake. I'll never believe a word against her—never."

And only a mile away, beneath the same June sky, a woman tore a bunch of roses from her dress and flung them far away over the sunny fields. "Oh! if only I were as young—as young as Robin Hood!" she said, and her eyes ached with unshed tears.

* * * * *

"I thought you had gone," said Robin, with mild reproach, looking down from his high dog-cart at Lady Armine's graceful figure. "I thought you must have left Knollbrooke two days ago."

"Did you? Why?"

"Have you forgotten?" his brown eyes opening wide. "You said you were going to that river picnic yesterday, and I went, and found that you had broken your promise. I heard too——"

"Ah!" exclaimed Cecil expressively, her bright face clouding over, "I daresay you heard divers excellent reasons why I allowed my friends to go without me. Never fear, Robin, I am not going to put you on the rack. On the contrary, let us forget yesterday, and think of to-day. Do you know that I have only one day left, that after to-morrow I am due miles away from here?"

Robin was standing beside her now in the quiet street; one hand on the mare's rein, his face bent downward to hers. They were firm friends now, this strangely assorted two—the pampered Society beauty and the innocent country lad, who only a month before had never met. Lady Armine had found her rural quarters with her fashionable friends exceedingly to her taste, judging from her disinclination to leave them, although Knollbrooke took a different view of the matter; but Lady Armine was supremely independent of public opinion, and it pleased her just now to rusticate in the heart of the Midlands, and allow her acquaintance with Robin Hood to ripen. She suffered him to walk and ride with her at specified times, and had more than once yielded to his urgent entreaty to accompany her

hostess to the Towers, and inspect the beauties of his magnificent home. She laughed and chattered to him by the hour together, neglecting the numerous admirers who already had gathered about her for his sake, taking an almost childish delight in his boyish society, and encouraging his bright confidences and eager aspirations as perhaps only Lady Armine herself knew successfully how to do.

And Robin? He was sixteen years old, and she was three-and-twenty. His heart was an open book to her, and hers to him only a new and entrancing enigma. He knew that she was beautiful; he felt that she had singled him out for her special favour and friendship, and in the same fashion as he loved the sunshine and the flowers, because they were friendly and beautiful, Robin Hood's heart warmed to this lovely woman of whom her world said such cruel things, and yet whose smile was utterly guileless and *insouciant*. He remembered now when he had first heard her name. It was at the opera in the preceding year when two men had discussed the points of a new beauty in his hearing, and Robin had followed their gaze and admired her also. He remembered now, although he had failed to do so at first, that pretty, flower-like face, so merry, so youthful, with its sweet, parted lips, and soft, smiling eyes; and he remembered, too, the man who had sat beside her, looking into her face.

"Lady Armine looks exquisite to-night," the speaker had said. "I predicted months ago that she would be the rage, and now you see she is out and out the prettiest woman in London."

"Greville seems to be of your opinion," his companion answered. And then they laughed softly, and Robin caught the words, "Poor Armine."

"Will you be sorry to go?" asked the boy bluntly. His face had not lost its colour; his eyes met hers with smiling eagerness as he put the question. He was sorry that she was going—very, but he had felt more sorry yesterday at something he had overheard; and to-day, under the fire of Cecil's beautiful eyes, he was less carelessly light-hearted than usual, and Lady Armine noted the change.

"Whither are you bound, Robin Hood?" she queried evasively. "I have a whole day before me, and my hostess has given me *carte blanche* to enjoy myself. Sir Knight! what do you say? Shall we spend it together?"

"Come then," laughed Robin gladly. "I am bound for Wilton, a village ten miles away, on business for my grandfather. Oh! will you come too—with me—really? How jolly! But perhaps you will be bored?"

Cecil mounted the dog-cart ere she answered him.

"You did not ask me that question last week, nor even two days ago when we spent the afternoon in the picture-gallery at the Towers. Robin, you are deteriorating, I fear, and I will punish you by declining to answer."

The boy laughed, as he touched the chestnut mare lightly with the whip.

"I am not used to Society ladies," he said apologetically.

"And I am not one—with you," answered Cecil quickly. "Oh, Robin, what a heavenly day! and your driving is as near perfection as mortal can ever hope to attain. I am going to enjoy every hour, every minute of to-day. I am going to forget that I am Lady Armine, and be Cecil only once more."

And she kept her word. On, on, they went, through fragrant, leafy lanes and old-world villages, past solitary farm-houses, and shady forest glades; on while the sunshine danced in Cecil's eyes, and turned her bright hair to gold; on while her heart beat madly, deliriously, and the sweet rose-tint bloomed radiantly in her cheek. And then came the quiet saunter through primitive Wilton, and the merry *tête-à-tête* luncheon that Robin declared was the "jolliest" he had ever shared. Everything was "jolly" to him to-day, for was not Cecil in her gayest, blithest mood and neither of them cast a thought to the coming parting. He was only a boy but he amused her, and oftentimes made her intensely sorrowful; and her manner this afternoon was every whit as youthful and joyous as his own. The admiring natives of the village sent Cecil into uncontrollable laughter, while Robin criticised their "get-ups," for her benefit, and bought her white-heart cherries from the solitary shop, which she accepted with equal alacrity. And then, as daylight waned, and Robin's business was satisfactorily concluded, they drove back home to Knollbrooke, their mood as light-hearted as when they set out.

"We have had a splendid day, Robin," she said, and Robin echoed "splendid," with right good will as they turned up the avenue to Mrs. Glover's house.

"I shall never have such another," said the girl, a little un-

steadily, for somehow Robin's glad, *debonnair* face so near to her own made her heart ache as she looked at it. "Whatever happens," she added very low, "I'll remember this always, that you and I had one good day."

Robin drew rein and sprang to the ground. But someone forestalled him as he advanced to Cecil's side, someone with a dark, fascinating face, who bowed low at her startled greeting, and drew her two hands within his.

"Lady Armine!" he said.

And Robin drove away without another word.

* * * * *

"It was good of you to come," said Robin gravely, pausing a moment at Lady Armine's side, in the brilliantly-lighted drawing-room at the Towers. "On your last night, too. Somehow I fancied you wouldn't."

"I wanted to come," replied Cecil simply, glancing up at him.

General Hood, his white-haired, patrician old grandfather, leant on the boy's arm, and Robin escorted him to his chair with charming courtesy. Cecil watched her "knight" as he flitted hither and thither on social duties intent, watched the bright changing beauty of his face and the graceful boyish manner that had won him already so many friends, and, with a half gesture, motioned him to her side.

"Why do you avoid me to-night, Robin Hood?" she asked.

Robin's cheek flushed.

"Lady Armine," he said, after a pause, "you had better ask me no more questions, or I shall surely offend you. There are many here who will interest you more than I. I am only a boy you know."

"I don't know," she replied. "And if you are, why then—I like boys. Robin," her beautiful face paling as she looked up at him, "Robin, don't you cast me off. Let us be friends still!"

His heart was too full for words.

"Robin," she said again, "let us go out into the lovely night air, away from these tiresome lights and the people who hate me so. I want to tell you why they hate me—why even the Knollbrooke worthies are learning to turn their backs upon me. Will you come?"

She threw a shawl around her shoulders, and hand in hand they quitted the room and stepped out into the dusky, sweet-

scented gardens. From where they stood they caught a glimpse of the silvery waters of the lake shining through the trees in the park, and Cecil's lips parted in an eager little cry.

"Oh! for a row, Robin! You will not—you cannot refuse on my very last night. Oh, Robin! do let us go!"

"Why—yes," he answered her passively; and they spoke no other word till they were sitting face to face in the little boat and the breeze that blew over the lake caressed Lady Armine's fair hair and the bright locks on Robin's brow.

"Do you know why they hate me so, Robin?" she said.

"I think I do," he answered, very sorrowfully. "Oh, Lady Armine, how can I help but know? It cannot be true," he went on passionately now, "it cannot—cannot be true. I have never believed it of you, never, and I will not, unless you bid me."

"Then I do bid you," the girl half murmured.

"Don't!" he cried, and just then a streak of moonlight rested on his face and showed her the large tears in his eyes. "Oh, Lady Armine! they are all wrong—every one of them. You will not do this thing—you cannot! Oh, think——"

"Hush!" she said.

And then he knew in a vague yet intuitive fashion that she had thought it all out long ago, and that his words fell as mockery on her ear.

"You are only a boy, Robin Hood," she began slowly, "and I am a woman of the world whose heart awoke too late. Robin, I can't endure it any longer. Fate is too strong for me." And yet the next instant she had caught his hand in hers and was clinging to it as one only clings in wild despair to the faintest hope. "He—Lord Armine—does not care. He sees the end as surely as the world sees it, as—I see it—at last. Oh, Robin! I am so hungry for love and he——"

"You will not!" pleaded the boy humbly. "I know that you will not!"

They were far out now on the bosom of the still peaceful lake, and the moonlight was flooding their faces with silver radiance. It fell on Cecil's, pale with the pallor of an utter despair—on her wide blue eyes and dishevelled golden hair; and it fell also on the brave, beautiful face of Robin Hood as those few impassioned words fell rapidly from his lips.

"Cecil—you will not!"

"No," she answered softly, dreamily, while a faint smile chased the anguish from her eyes—"no, Robin, you are right! I will not!"

Before he could divine her meaning, with one swift, determined leap she quitted the boat and sank violently in the shining waters. Robin saw it, and the sculls dropped from his hands, while a terrible cry for aid burst involuntarily from his lips and rang out over the lake. The next moment he had followed her, and his arms strove in vain to encircle her as she rose to the surface.

"Let me go, Robin," she cried. "Oh, let me go! There is no other way."

His lips were set; his breath came thick and fast. He spoke no word, but his clasp on her slight form grew tighter, and he was gradually conquering her feeble resistance. From the bank came the sound of an eager voice. Robin's heart leapt as he heard it. Someone was swimming rapidly towards them—someone who, as he reached them, drew Cecil's drooping form from Robin's arms and struck out manfully for the boat.

"Hold on, Master Robin," he cried, "hold on three minutes longer. There's help coming."

Robin's straining eyes were turned upwards where the moonlight smiled down on him and mocked his anguish. What was that strange horrible sensation of dizziness that stole over him, paralysing his limbs and turning his heart faint within him? What did the moonlight and the water and the breeze say to him but, "Die—Robin Hood—die!"

"Courage!" cried that brave, cheery voice; and with one last effort the boy turned his eyes in the direction whence help was coming—too late. "Hold on! You are saved! You are saved!"

But he saw nothing as the moonlight faded from his sight; heard nothing save those myriad voices in his ear that cried to him, "Die—Robin—die!"

"Oh God," he sobbed, as the waters drew him down. "Oh God!"

And his heart broke in the cry.

* * * * *

In the bright June weather a woman comes every year to the

place where Robin Hood lies sleeping. Her hands are full of the roses he used to love, and her heart overflows with a bitter sorrow and repentance that words but vainly tell.

She kneels on the trim, short grass and looks up from the flower-decked tomb at the wide azure brilliance of the summer sky.

"Robin Hood," she says, through her falling tears, "Oh, Robin Hood, you did not die in vain!"

And this is Cecil's atonement.

LOUEY JACKSON.

A Cornish Maid.

By BARBARA LAKE,

Author of "THE BETRAYAL OF REUBEN HOLT," "A PROFITLESS QUEST," etc. etc.

CHAPTER X.

UP IN LONDON.

THE ruddy glow of the rising sun was only just beginning to tint the soft, grey mists shrouding the Cornish hills, when Clem Freer, on that two-months-past July morning, had set out to walk to Truro, so as to be in time to catch the train for London, and it was past six o'clock in the evening when he reached his final destination.

Full fifteen years had come and gone since his boyish feet had trodden the streets of the capital—or, rather, that limited portion of it where his childhood had been passed, and he felt half-bewildered by the hurrying crowds, the whirling carriages and cabs, and the heavily-laden vans, amidst which he found himself when—a sort of knapsack slung on a stick over his shoulder—he turned out of the railway station into the noisy city streets.

As has been said, he was a lad of something under twelve when his grandfather (dead now these five years), had carried him away down to Cornwall, and his recollections of his London home had gradually faded from his mind.

Before returning to the metropolis on his present fortune-seeking expedition, he had given but little thought to the question as to what he should do, or where turn his steps, when he should have arrived at his journey's end ; but once there, and surrounded by a host of unfamiliar and self-engrossed faces, he began to feel uncomfortably alone in the world, and to cast about in his mind as to where he should bestow himself for the night.

All he could remember of his earlier abode was that it had been somewhere in the neighbourhood of Hoxton, and there was a floating idea in his mind that, if he could make his way to this locality, there would be such an air of home-likeness and

familiarity about it as would prove cheering amidst such loneliness as the crowded city wore for him.

He had the vaguest of notions as to where and how far off Hoxton might be, but he would not seek information on the subject—having a boyish dread of being thought a raw and ignorant rustic. So, trusting that fortune would guide his steps aright, he set off at a brisk pace for the place he wanted—thinking to find there an inexpensive lodging.

But, like one in total darkness, he kept to something of a circle—wandering back, after having walked hither and thither for a couple of hours or more, to within a mile of his starting-point. He was unaware of this, however, and in passing along a narrow street of small and fairly-decent houses, his eye was caught by a couple of cards in the upper panes of a front-room window.

Struck by the idea that these cards might help him in his search for a night's lodging, he stooped to examine them by the light of a contiguous gas-lamp, and was soon in possession of the information that "mangling" was "done here," and that "Lodgings for single men" were to be obtained within.

Rapping with his stick on the knockerless door, a red-haired, cross-eyed boy, with a spice of the street-arab in his appearance, responded to his summons.

"What d'yer want?" demanded the boy, without giving the visitor time to state his business. "Couldn't yer a knocked a little louder?"

"I daresay I might if I'd tried," returned Clem, regarding the impish-looking janitor with considerable disfavour. "But there's a card in the window that says there are lodgings to let here; and——"

"Well, I didn't say as there warn't, did I?" interrupted the boy.

"No, you didn't, my man," returned Clem, feeling disposed to pursue his search in some other quarter; "but is what the card says true?"

"What d'yer 'spose it's stuck there for, if 'tisn't?—there's a lodgen' upsteers that's good ernuf fer the Lord Mayer hisself. I'm never let to sleep there, an' if you git it, you may think yerself jolly well lucky!"

"Well, that may turn out to be a matter of opinion," said Clem. "Can I see it?"

"I dunno why yer shouldn't, but I'll go an'——"

"Hi, you Sam, who'er you a talkin' to?" enquired a voice from the back premises. "You come here an' take a turn at the mangle while I get a minute's rest." And a heavy rumbling that had been going on during the colloquy between Clem and Sam, suddenly ceased. "Do you hear what I say, Sam?" continued the voice, as a tolerably tidy woman bustled into the passage to enforce her demand by a box on the ears of Sam, who, cleverly dodging a repetition of the assault, fled out into the summer night.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, I'm sure," cried the woman, catching sight of Clem; "I didn't see you, at first. Was you wanting a lodging, sir?" the added title being the result of a rapid inspection of the well-formed, grey-tweed-clad figure in the doorway.

"Yes, I was looking for a lodging," began Clem, dubiously. For though the domicile was no poorer than the one he had so recently left, the latter was full of sweet, fresh, moorland scent, while this place was unpleasantly stuffy and ill-odoured.

"I do let a room," the woman went on, noting his hesitation, "but it's not much to boast of. Would you step in an' take a look at it?"

"I may as well," agreed Clem, after a little further hesitation. "I only want a sleeping-room, and I can't afford to pay much for it." And he followed his conductress, Mrs. Reader by name, up the loudly-creaking stairs.

"It's clean, if it's nothing else," remarked Mrs. Reader, holding a guttering rushlight aloft, for the better illumination of the room. And this assertion seeming, in a measure, to be founded on fact, and the terms asked for the use of the mean little apartment suiting Clem's means, he paid a week's rent in advance and took possession.

He had been liberally supplied with thick sandwiches of bread-and-bacon by his Cornish landlady, who, if rough of manner, had liked and been kind to him, in a motherly way; so, declining Mrs. Reader's offer to get him "a bit o' supper," and resolving to be up by times next morning, he went straightway to bed.

But though Clem wrote a fairly-good hand, could keep accounts, and was more than willing to make himself useful in many ways, to his bitter disappointment and surprise, few there

seemed to be who required his services. A day's work here and there he obtained—this being due, more often than not, to his "taking" manner and appearance, rather than to any pressing need of assistance on his employer's part; and—though he still managed to keep the shelter of Mrs. Reader's roof over his head—as time crept on, it became no uncommon thing for him to go dinnerless through the day and supperless to bed at night.

Yet he always put on a bold front when writing to Jenny—telling her nothing of his trials and deprivations; and it was only Mary Seaton's quick sympathy that had enabled her to perceive the sadness underlying the cheerful surface of the letters he sent to the girl he loved so well.

CHAPTER XI.

CLEM'S ACCIDENT.

IT was getting on for the middle of November, and, for more than a fortnight Clem had been in constant employment at a big warehouse in the City. It was poor-paying work enough, though infinitely better and more to his liking than any he had yet obtained. Moreover, it promised advanced wages in the future, and Clem's spirits rose in proportion to the improvement in his prospects.

But he had not yet told Jenny about this bit of good fortune, for he knew how disappointed she would be if it should end as other promising bits of good fortune had ended—in smoke. And, somehow, Fate did seem to have a spite against him. For in passing along a busy thoroughfare, late one evening, a heavily-laden omnibus pulled up to enable an elderly passenger to alight. This passenger had been sitting beside the driver, and as ill-luck would have it, he missed his foothold in descending to the ground, and fell full length under the fore-wheel of the conveyance.

A simultaneous cry of horror burst from the throat of every beholder; for the horses were just about to start afresh, and it seemed inevitable that the prostrate man must be crushed out of life. But, in the very nick of time, Clem, who was close by, sprang into the road and, dragging the man from his perilous position, set him safely on his feet.

The rescue took less time to accomplish than it has taken to describe, but the near omnibus-horse, startled by the sudden outcry and rush, began wildly plunging and flinging out its heels; and before Clem was aware of his danger, an iron-shod hoof had struck him a terrible blow in the side. Closing around him, half-a-dozen men with ready hands caught him ere he fell, and bore him, gasping and writhing with pain, to the footway, and thence to the shop of a chemist a few doors farther on.

The chemist, however, could do but little for him, and, his injuries seeming to be of a grave nature, he was carefully carried to a cab, and accompanied by a couple of policemen, together with the gentleman whose life he had saved, was conveyed to the nearest hospital.

Here a very brief examination sufficed to show that he had sustained serious fracture of the ribs with other internal injuries, and these having been rapidly and skilfully treated, he was placed in bed—to die, or be carefully nursed back to life and strength, as it might happen.

Chloroform had mercifully deadened his sense of suffering during the tending of his hurts, and he was too faint and dazed, on recovering consciousness, to volunteer any account of himself—only, in reply to inquiries, giving his name and place of abode, with an added request that Mrs. Reader might be informed of his whereabouts.

And then there followed a long and weary time of sickness and peril. For weeks he hovered between life and death; but, at last, youth and a good constitution, won the day, and he began slowly to mend.

Throughout his illness he had been constantly visited by the man, Mr. Noble, whose acquaintance he had made under what might have been very tragic circumstances, and he had been cheered by this new friend's grateful promises to obtain some employment for him, when he should be restored to health. Mrs. Reader, too, had managed, once or twice, to snatch an hour from her toilsome day for sake of going to see him; but—and it was a very big "but"—she brought him never a line or a letter from the girl for one look of whose soft, dark eyes—for only a scratch or two of whose dilatory pen—his heart pined so sadly.

When he first met with his accident, his main anxiety had been to keep Jenny in ignorance of that which had happened,

and this anxiety had coloured all his wild talk during his ensuing fever and delirium. So strong a hold had it taken of him that, in the weakness of his slow recovery, he could not shake off its influence, and he told himself that no other hand than his own should pen the story of his mishap to her who was some day to be his wife.

So Christmas came and passed, and Jenny was still in the dark as to the misfortune which had befallen her lover.

When, however, the new year was something under a fortnight old, Clem, though still too weak to be capable of much exertion, was considered well enough to be discharged from the hospital as cured ; and with a small sum of money pressed upon him as a loan by Mr. Noble, he was ready and anxious to face the world once more. For besides the satisfaction of possessing the wherewithal to obtain present necessities, he had the assured prospect of a preliminary berth as ticket-collector at the Paddington railway-station—which berth, Mr. Noble, who seemed to have a good deal to do with the management of the Great Western Line, had secured for him ; and so, with renewed hope, he made his way back to his lodgings at Mrs. Reader's.

Upon reaching this haven of rest, his first proceeding was to set about writing to Jenny Caerden. The afternoon was cold and cheerless—sodden snow lying in miry ridges on either side the footways, and spreading the ill-kept by-streets of that locality, with slush ; and Mrs. Reader had little difficulty in persuading her pale and worn-looking lodger to sit by the fire in her small front room, while he performed his task.

Mrs. Reader had lighted this fire only in anticipation of Clem's return—she, poor soul ! having no leisure, herself, to profit by the comfort of it, being compelled by stress of poverty to work, morning, noon and night, at her mangle. Her husband, who was "something down at the docks," as she put it, spent the greater part of his time and his earnings at the public-houses near the scene of his labours ; while Master Sam Reader, being an only surviving olive-branch, and one whom no amount of threats could keep out of the streets or induce to put in more than an occasional appearance at the board-school, was suffered to gang his ain gait, as he listed.

And Sam's likings did not invariably accord with those of his hard-working mother. But on the present occasion it pleased

him to follow her counsel by curling himself up on the hearth to enjoy the unwonted luxury of the blaze ; and here he sat, deeply absorbed in the whittling of a holly-stick, while Clem wrote his long, explanatory letter to Jenny.

It was dark by time the epistle was finished, and the snow, wet and heavy, was again falling. So, gladly yielding to Mrs. Reader's entreaty to let Sam run and post the letter, Clem handed the boy a penny for the stamp and a ha'penny for his trouble, and having duly impressed upon him the importance of his mission, he watched him as he scampered down the street on his way to the post-office.

Sam did not reappear, however, until quite late in the evening, but he gave such a glib and circumstantial account of how he had affixed the stamp and where he had posted the missive, that Clem was perfectly satisfied ; and for a few days after despatching his news. his heart was light with bright anticipations of the tender reply it would call forth.

But at the end of a week—by which time he had entered upon his new duties at the Railway Terminus—he had not received the expected answer to his letter. And this was from the very good reason that it had never reached its destination. For Sam Reader—wicked imp, that he was!—had deliberately added to his own ha'penny, the penny entrusted to him for the stamp, and had laid out, for his own private advantage, the whole sum in buns. Then, thinking his theft less likely to be discovered if the letter never reached the hands for which it was intended, he had torn it into shreds and had strewed it about in the gutters—finishing off the nefarious transaction with the plausible story as to how he had fulfilled his trust.

Having no suspicion touching the boy's honesty, Clem first felt surprised, then hurt, and finally indignant, because of Jenny's prolonged and unaccountable silence. But as the days spun themselves out into weeks, and still never a word of reply came to his letter, his resentment began to give place to alarm, and he resolved to write again, for an explanation of such strange and puzzling neglect.

He had to be at his post early and late, seldom reaching his lodgings at night till after the other inmates of the house were in bed. But having made an opportunity to get home an hour earlier than usual, he found Mrs. Reader and her hopeful son,

still up ; and again, at the good woman's invitation, he sat down in her little kitchen to indite his appeal to Jenny.

And once again, though he carefully stamped the letter himself, he suffered Sam to carry it to the post, paying him the same commission as on the former occasion.

But, given Sam Reader's abilities, stamps are as easy of conversion into buns as are penny-pieces, and tearing off the corner of the envelope bearing the postage, the boy slipped it into his pocket for future use, and for the second time, consigned to the safe-keeping of the friendly gutters, the letter committed to his care.

CHAPTER XII.

JENNY'S DREAMS.

"WELL, Jenny, I wouldn't go if I was you—I couldn't bear to. It doesn't seem right to go to a dance, unless you'd written to ask Clem if he'd mind."

The speaker was Mary Seaton and her words were addressed to Jenny Caerden, in whose little parlour the two girls were sitting, drinking a cup of tea.

"'Tisn't a bit o' use talkin', Mary," said Jenny, in reply to her companion's observation. "If you think I'm goin' to be a—a nun, 'cos Clem's away, you'm mistaken, my dear—thaat's all !"

"Of course you will do as you like, Jenny, and I must say it would seem hard for you not to go. Only *I* wouldn't, in your place."

"Iss, but us be diff'rent, Mary—you an' me."

"What can have come to Miller Penrose, that he should want to give a dance on New Year's Eve, I can't think," continued Mary. "He never did such a thing before, that I've heard tell of."

"Oh, I b'lieve 'tis *my* doin'," said Jenny, with an air of importance. "I told t' miller he ought to gi' t' neighbors a dance in un's big ketchin, an' un said he would, if I 'ud come an'—an' dance wi' he."

"Dance with *him* ! Why, he can't dance."

"Awh, but he ses he *can*," laughed Jenny.

"The horrid little wretch ! But you won't dance with him, Jenny ?"

"Oh, lors, why not? So waal dance wi' he as wi' anywan else!"

"But you ought not to dance, at all. It wouldn't be so bad, just going to the party, but, with Clem away, you ought to be very sober and quiet. I don't like to be always lecturing you, Jenny, but it is only acting a friend's part to tell you what I think; and indeed, indeed, you ought not to dance. What would Clem say, if he heard of it?"

"What would Clem say, Mary?—waal I can't tell what un 'ud say, an' I doan't care, a bit! 'Tis nigh upon two months sin' I got a letter fro' he, as 'ee knaws, for sure; for 'twas i' t' fore end o' November when un last wrote, an' I ha'n't had another ward fro' un, though 'tis close on New Year's Day!"

"But you didn't answer the last letter, you know," urged Mary.

"Waal, no, I didn't, 'tis true. I meant to wait for t' next wan, an' when it didn't come, I got so vext. But if Clem thinks I be t' sort o' maid to bow down to he, or anywan else," drawing herself up, proudly, "'Tis waal to teach un his mistake, sune's maybe. I know my warth better than thaat!"

"I can't understand his silence," said Mary, ponderingly. "I—I suppose Tom Penrose hasn't been making mischief? I do dislike him so—I'd give him credit for almost any ill work!"

"Why, what could un do?" asked Jenny, with a quick glance at her friend's thoughtful face—her own paling a little, as she reflected that the miller *might* have made mischief, and not wholly without reason, if he had felt so disposed, or if he had thought to further his own ends by so doing. "But what do 'ee mane, Mary?" she went on, after a few moments of anxious cogitation. "How could t' miller make mischief 'tween Clem an' me?"

"Oh, I don't know," returned Mary, evasively. "A bad man can always make mischief if he cares to take the trouble."

"But why should un care to? 'Sides, t' miller isn't sech a bad man, as I knaws by, an' I doan't think 'ee ha' got any call to say so, Mary. But you ha' bin hearin' something spitefu' 'bout me, 'tis plain! Now, do 'ee tell me whaat 'tis, will 'ee?"

"I haven't heard anything really spiteful, dear, but—but for weeks past, folks have been saying hard things about you and Tom Penrose."

"Whaat sort o' things?"

"Well, they say you encourage his attentions—that you mean to throw Clem Freer over, for him. I'm sure it isn't true, and I say so, when I'm asked questions; but oh, Jenny, do, do be careful. Don't let the miller stand talking at your door, such a long time after dark, and don't let him walk home from church, with you, Sunday evenings. Folks *will* talk, you know; and think how it would hurt Clem if such tales reached his ears!"

"Awh, I'm sure I doan't knaw as 't would! How 'm I to knaw un hasn't got a Lon'on maid to care for, 'stead o' me? Tis my b'liief un has. I can't ermagin' why un doesn't write, if he be as true as you seem to think, Mary!"

"You don't mean what you say," cried Mary. "Clem Freer take up with a London girl, after loving you as truly as you know he did—as I am sure he does, still? Oh, Jenny, you know, in your heart, that it's not so!"

"Waal, whaat's un so silent for?—can 'ee tell un thaat, Mary Seaton?"

"How can I? It is a question you ought to get settled for yourself. But you are not thinking of casting Clem off, are you? Tell me you mean to be true to him, in spite of his long silence, and in spite of what folks are saying about you."

But Jenny made no answer—she only burst into genuine and half hysterical tears. And this was such a very unusual proceeding on her part, that poor Mary—unfeignedly alarmed and self-reproachful—hastily pulled up her chair to the weeping girl's side, and slipping her arm about her waist, drew her pretty head on to her shoulder, and patted, coaxed and strove to soothe her, as if she had been a child.

Some minutes elapsed, however, and a good deal of petting had to be expended on her, before Jenny chose to be comforted; and then, drying away her tears, she impulsively pressed her warm, red lips, on her friend's cheek.

"Awh, Mary," she cried, with a final sob, "I do wish I was like you. But I ain't, an' I never shall be—so waal wish I was like t' queen on her throne! But doan't 'ee think worse o' me than 'ee can help, if I do things 'ee doan't quite erprove of."

"No, dear, I won't," promised Mary soothingly.

"You see, Mary," with a pathetic sigh, "I am more tried than

most maids be, 'cos I do so hate pov'ty an' wark. I can't help it—I was born so, I s'pose, an' if Clem can't make a lot o' money, 't would be best for we to part. 'T all events," lifting her head from its gentle resting-place, "I woan't be slighted by he, when I can ha' t' miller an' all his walth, for jest holdin' up a finger—an' he wild wi' joy to git me, too!"

"Don't talk of the miller, Jenny—don't think of him," pleaded Mary. "If you did give Clem up, to marry *him*, you'd repent it all the rest of your life. I'm sure he's cruel—I'm certain of it. Think how dreadful it would be for you if he treated you badly, when once you were fast tied to him!"

"But un wouldn't dare to. 'Sides, I can twist un roun' an' roun', jest as I like; an' if un ever did say a rough ward to me, I 'ud—why, I 'ud shake un!"

"Oh, Jenny, Jenny, that you should dream, only for a moment, of marrying a man you can say such shocking things about!"

"'T would be better than marryin' wan that was poor, an' then breakin' his heart wi' frettin' an' frettin', 'cos un couldn't gi' me t' things I pined for! Now, wouldn't it?"

"Oh, I don't know. I—I really, hardly know!"

"Awh, but *I* do, Mary! Now, jest think," her lovely eyes beginning to sparkle through the traces of her recent tears, as they dwelt on some bright mental picture she was conjuring up. "If I wedded t' miller, I should never want for *anything*—never! Un ses so. Un ses I should allus do erzackly as I like! I should keep open house, an' ha' all my friens to come an' see me, an' as many maids to wait on me as I cared to. Un ses he 'ud buy me a pony an' carridge, too, so as I could drive about t' town, while t' parson's wife went afoot; an' I 'ud take *you* for a ride, every day, Mary, an' us 'ud ha' fine times. T' miller ses t' parson, hisself, 'ud lift his hat to me, an' I should be as gran' a lady as any i' t' place!"

"Has it gone as far as this, Jenny?" asked Mary, sadly, as the other paused—not so much from want of words, as from want of breath.

"Oh, waal," she answered, "o' course 'tis only a bit o' talk atween t' miller an' me. There ain't no harm in talkin', you know, an' there ain't anything ser'us in it, yet awhiles."

"I hope and trust there never will be," said Mary fervently. "I'm only two years older than you, Jenny, and p'r'aps I oughtn't

to take upon myself to give you advice ; but I'm fond of you, dear, and at least I may say, don't, pray don't, if you care for your happiness, ever have anything serious to do with Miller Penrose. I wish, with all my heart, you weren't going to his horrid dance ! ”

“ Un wouldn't gi' it if I didn't go. 'Sides, you'm goin', ain't you ? ”

“ Oh, I don't know—there's nothing settled about it, yet. Will seems to want me to go with him, and p'raps I may, if mother's well enough to be left for an hour or two, but I'd rather stay at home.”

“ I doan't see why 'ee shouldn't want to go. I do, and I mean to, anyways. Us don't git so much 'musement i' this dull place, but whaat wan should make t' most o' it when wan gets t' chance ! You ha' got a baw, too, to 'scort you ; but mine's away, up to Lon'on, 'joying hisself, an' I must do t' best I can, athout wan.”

“ I don't call Will Ashdown my beau, now, Jenny. There hasn't been a word of love between us, this many a day.”

“ Ah, but there's looks as speak as plain as wards, an' I know how 'tis atween 'ee ! 'Ee can't mislead *me*—i' sech matters 't anyrate.”

“ You are misleading yourself and jumping to wrong conclusions,” said Mary quietly. “ Things haven't been the same with Will and me, as they used to be before—before he came baek to live at Treverdale.”

“ Awh, but they *will* be, byme-by—you knaw they will, Mary. An' I shall be rael glad to see 'ee wed to Will Ashd'n—'deed I shall. I didn't like 'ee much, when 'ee first came down here, 'cos I used to think 'ee so stuck up ; but I'm rael glad, now, to knaw 'ee 'ull be happy, someday.”

“ You are a dear little thing, Jenny ! ”

“ Lors, now, hark to 'ee callin' me 'little'—an' I *ever*-so-much bigger than you be ! But you mustn't be jellus o' me, Mary, when I ha' got a han'somer house than you, an' a carridge to ride about in, an'—t' least, I mean, when Clem's made a lot o' money an' gits me all t' things I want.”

“ No ; I won't be jealous of you, dear,” said Mary, smiling, half-pityingly, at the beautiful, vain, self-deluded girl who—it seemed only too evident—was slowly, but surely, making up her

mind to a step that would, in all probability, lead to bitter disappointment and regret.

"Awh, thaat's right," she said, in response to Mary's smiling assurance, "an' I do hope 'ee 'ull come to t' miller's party. What be 'ee goin' to wear?"

"Oh, only my Sunday frock—if I go at all. Will likes it, and it is of a colour that lights up nicely."

"Iss, so 'tis. An' I am goin' to trim up my muslin gown wi' red ribben. T' miller gave me a long length, day 'fore yesterday, for a Chris'mas present, an' t' gown's as good as new when 'tis smoothed out. So I dessay I shall look as waal as most o' t' maids as 'ull be there."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MILLER'S PARTY.

IT was New Year's Eve—frosty, fine and starlit, and the miller's great kitchen, cleared of all superfluous furniture, had put on an elaborate gala-dress of greenery, in honour of the guests who had assembled to dance in it.

"I dessay I shall look as waal as most o' t' maids," Jenny had said to Mary Seaton. And so she did—not only "as waal," but incomparably better. In fact, it would have been difficult to match her for loveliness, though the whole county had been ransacked for a compeer; and there were many amongst the company, that long remembered how beautiful she had looked on that eventful night.

She was the gayest of the merry throng—her light laugh ringing out musically and often, above the din of many chattering tongues, the scraping of Cobbler Pantune's fiddle, and the noisy dancing of clumsily-shod feet. Not a thought of absent Clem seemed to disturb her peace of mind—not a care for the future, to mar her present felicity; and when Miller Penrose, notwithstanding his limp, led her ostentatiously to the head of the romping country-dance that opened the evening's festivities, a look of triumph lighted up her soft, dark eyes, while an air of almost insolent exultation marked her bearing towards the less honoured guests.

True, she joined the dancers but seldom, and then only as the

millers' partner. And Tom Penrose was more than ever impressed by the brilliance of her beauty, and his attentions to her were so unmistakable—for he put her as far as possible into the position of hostess—that his other guests began to shake their heads, condemningly; while his crabbed old housekeeper was filled with malevolent rage, that a "chit o' a maid, loike she," should be allowed to trench on her cherished prerogatives.

Many pairs of disapproving eyes watched the two as—Jenny, bantering, and the miller parrying her laughingly sharp thrusts—they sat, stood, or danced together throughout the evening—Jenny, who was quicker of observation than her companion, secretly noting her neighbours' grave looks, and rather enjoying the situation.

Sitting, quiet and watchful, in her corner amongst the dowagers, Mary Seaton was sad at heart as she thought of Clem Freer; and an indefinable foreboding for Jenny's future, weighed down her spirits as she pictured the troubles into which her deluded friend seemed bent on rushing. Will Ashdown too (looking paler and less sturdy, but decidedly happier than before his illness), observing, with strong disfavour, the pretty tricks and clever tactics played off on the miller by the reckless girl, was unboundedly thankful that his own brief but wild infatuation had been checked in mid-career; and he told himself that he should pity any man who might be so unfortunate as to become her husband.

Howbeit, before the party broke up, Jenny had settled her own destiny—had decided the question as to who should become her husband. For, yielding to the representations and entreaties of Tom Penrose, she had agreed to marry him, and that without a week's unnecessary delay. She had never "raelly" cared for Clem Freer, she told the miller—she had not only never cared for him, but she had been giving him to understand, for months past, that she wished to be free, adding that she should never be happy until she had placed an insuperable barrier between herself and his persistence.

Alas for the triple lie!—it was little to Jenny's excuse that her heart smote her as she spoke it.

But she had given the miller her promise, and he, his breast full of half-wicked exultation, meant to hold her to her bargain.

Before this climax was reached, however, Will Ashdown and Mary Seaton had taken their unobserved departure from the Mill House; and, on their short journey down to the smithy their future—and a happy one it now promised to be—was also decided.

"Mary," said Will, drawing the girl's hand through his arm, "I treated you very badly last summer, didn't I?"

"Oh, Will, it doesn't seem quite fair to ask me that," expostulated Mary: "But—well, yes, I think you did."

"None knows it better than I do, dear," said Will; "and I think I shall profit by what I know. But you never gave me a hard word, and scarce a look of reproach, and I—Oh, Mary there are few girls would have been so good to me as you have been, and I, if I didn't show it, was grateful."

'Don't say any more about it, Will," whispered Mary, clinging to his arm.

"I think I had better have it out with you, now that I've begun," he returned, "though I know there is little need for me to confess to you how nearly I lost my head—not my heart, Mary—over Jenny Caerden. For I believe you guessed all about it, long before I guessed myself, that I was going wrong. Didn't you?"

"I soon saw that you were very much taken by Jenny's beauty And she is beautiful."

"Yes—beautiful enough for anything, if that's all one wants. But I'm afraid I shall never be able to make you understand how ashamed I am of my spell of madness about her—how sorry I am for it, on your account, Mary."

"I do understand. I think I have been learning to understand, these two or three months past, for my heart has been getting so light, again."

"My own little sweetheart! My dear, good little Molly," drawing her closer to his side. "After all," he went on, as they moved slowly towards home, "I think I owe Clem Freer a good turn for that knock-down blow of his. The breaking of my head brought me to my senses, if it did lay me helpless on your gentle hands, Mary. I might never have found out all your goodness, all your true worth, but for that long illness."

"It may be well for us, p'raps, that our love has been tried a bit," she returned, her heart as full as it could hold of content.

"Then you love me, still, Mary?" stopping, in the clear, frosty air, to put the question. "You do love me?"

"Oh, Will, how can you doubt it?"

"I don't doubt it; but I want to hear you say you have forgiven me—forgiven me entirely."

"I forgave you long ago."

"Enough to take me back?" striving to read her face by the starlight. "Enough, after all that has happened, to trust your happiness to my keeping?—to be my wife?"

"Enough for it all. If I could not trust you now, Will, I—well, I think I should die!"

And the hearts of the re-united lovers were in full tune with the joyous clangour of bells that, near and afar, floated out on the air, in glad welcome of the New Year.

(To be continued.)

BELGRAVIA.

AUGUST, 1893.

Found Wanting.*

By MRS. ALEXANDER.

Author of "THE WOOING O'T," "A WOMAN'S HEART," "BLIND FATE,"
"FOR HIS SAKE," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XVI.

"HALCYON DAYS."

MADAME FALK and her partner returned to their ordinary Parisian life, much invigorated by their holiday, and further cheered by an improved offer from an Australian paper, for which Madame Falk had already written, for articles treating of political as well as other gossip. The busy journalist was delighted to have some more solid subject to deal with, and set about her fresh work with much spirit and energy.

Still, both Miss Barton and her cousin felt the loss of May Riddell very much. There was always something to interest them in the pale, quiet girl, who came to them with her difficulties, her few hopes, her little bits of success, either in music or in needle-work, humble though they were. It seemed that with her went everything like progress and development, and that only the sameness of routine was left.

Her letters were eagerly looked for, especially by Madame Falk, who understood, and was really attached to her.

Miss Barton had a narrower mental range and a less genial temperament, more given to finding flaws than to discovering

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merit, still May's letters were welcome to her, if only to find fault with them.

Her description of life at Kensington seemed much more terrible to May's friends than she intended it to be; and Madame Falk greatly rejoiced when she found that Ogilvie had re-appeared and seemed as ever ready to champion his ward.

"He is wonderfully nice and kind," remarked Madame Falk, one raw and uncomfortable evening towards the end of November, as she sat over the fire, having come in from a long ramble, "seeking what she could discover" for her next day's "letter." "Now, at first I thought him cold, haughty and self-absorbed. It is really hard to judge any one justly, and Mr. Ogilvie had proved me to be wrong in my conclusions most satisfactorily," and she folded up May's last epistle which she had been reading.

"Well, yes. Ogilvie has been very good to May Riddell," returned Miss Barton, who had just returned to the *salon* after hanging up her partner's much-bedrabbled skirt to dry in the kitchen. "But I fancy it is just a fad. He pleases himself about it in some way, and is just as fond of Piers Ogilvie through it all."

"Never mind, Sarah. We have no business to dig under the surface for motives, let us be satisfied with the fruit they bear, if it be good and pleasant."

"Um, well, perhaps so. There's the bell."

"Yes. I met Mademoiselle Perret this morning and asked her to dinner."

"You did? Why, Adrienne is out, and the cloth is not laid."

"What matter? She will be in directly. Open the door, do, Sarah."

"Ah!" A prolonged "Ah" almost immediately greeted Madame Falk's ears as the music teacher entered.

"*Bon soir, mesdames.* How truly comfortable you look here—the bright fire, the lamp, the closed curtain. *Dieu!* how cold it is outside. Dear Mademoiselle Barton, it is so long since I had the pleasure of seeing you. Madame I sometimes encounter, always full of business, always full of energy. Now, the cold paralyses me. Thanks very much," as Madame Falk set a comfortable chair for her. "It is a great pleasure to spend an hour or two with such kind friends." And the little

woman proceeded to give various details touching her work. This was her worst season—strangers had not yet returned to Paris, regular pupils had not recommenced their lessons, or had colds—and the firing—*Dieu*, it cost dear. It was like burning gold. Still, she must not complain. On the whole her “Cours” prospered, and she had the promise of more pupils after Christmas. So she talked on till dinner was announced, just as she had asked, “And that dear child—my little May?”

“She is quite well. I will read you her last letter presently,” returned Madame Falk smiling. “Come, Mademoiselle. I hope you have brought an appetite with you, for we have only a bouillon—*Bifteck au pommes de terre* and *macaroni à l’Italienne*—to offer.”

“But it is a repast for an epicure,” cried Mademoiselle Perret, joyously, as they sat down.

Having done justice to the *viandes*, the *convives* dallied over their cheese, and Madame Falk read some passages from May’s letter.

“Then there is a message for you, Mademoiselle,” she continued. “Tell dear Mademoiselle Perret, with my love, that I am taking singing lessons. My master is an Italian, who is the accompanist to the great Signor V—— and I believe is quite as good a teacher. I think I improve. How I wish I could have an opportunity of having my kind friends’ opinion. It is a great pleasure to me to practice, for life here is a little monotonous, though I am ashamed to say this when I am so kindly treated, and so really well off. Mr. Ogilvie is very good in taking me to the theatre, or to a concert when he can, but he has not much time. When he goes away it will be dull indeed, and, of course, he may go at any time; but perhaps after Christmas I may have a holiday, and pay you a little visit. What joy it would be, especially as I can pay for my own travels. I spend hardly any money, and hope to save a good deal of my salary. I believe you will see Mrs. Conroy and Frances in Paris soon. Mrs. Conroy caught a bad cold, and cannot throw it off, they fear she must go for the winter to Cannes or Hyères.”

“Ah, dear, poor lady! It is sad. But I am charmed to hear so good an account of the sweet child. I suppose she is well-placed. The lady she is with is what you call an ‘old maid’?” asked Mademoiselle, who was peeling an orange.

"Yes ; a Scotch lady, and rich ; a relation of Mr. Ogilvie's."

"Then perhaps she will leave our young friend some of her riches. And Mr. Ogilvie? I am glad he places her with a relative. He is an elderly gentleman and unmarried? I have never seen him—which I regret."

"He isn't young, and he isn't elderly," said Miss Barton. "He is a cold, silent, well-bred, diplomatic personage, but he was rather intimate with Mr. Riddell, who, it seems, confided his daughter to Ogilvie's care with his last breath, and I am sure nothing short of fearing the judgment that might be coming upon him would have made him give May a thought."

Mademoiselle shook her head.

"Well, *mes chères dames*, I know your manners and customs are different from ours, but human nature is very much the same in all countries, and it seems to me more or less dangerous that a fascinating man of a certain age should have the care and direction of a charming girl like our dear May."

"I am sure Mr. Ogilvie is by no means fascinating," cried Madame Falk.

"And I am sure I can not see the remarkable charm of May, though she is a nice good girl!" exclaimed Miss Barton.

"Ah! That is because she hasn't fat, red cheeks, and big white teeth, a figure like an hour-glass, and has not swallowed the poker!" said Mademoiselle with immense fire. "What you English do not understand is grace, softness, thought for others. Then she has eyes—*mon Dieu*, yes, what eyes! Women may not admire her, men will, and this Ogilvie—has he water in his veins or blood? Englishmen may seem cold, frozen, but they have blood in their veins, strong blood, or I mistake much! Then he takes her to the theatre, to the concerts—does the rich Miss go too? No, she is not mentioned! Believe me, it is not wise—it is not safe."

"You certainly do not understand our life nor our habits," replied Madame Falk. "Mr. Ogilvie is a man, I fancy, of great ambition, accustomed to brilliant society, a simple, untrained child like May could only be an object of compassionate kindness—and then he is a man of honour!"

"Honour!" cried Mademoiselle. "Pah! It is inconceivable that a woman of the world, a clever, brilliant woman like you, my good friend, should have the eyes blinded in one direction.

There are men everywhere and women are women, silly imaginative weak beings, who only ask to be allowed to love—anyone. It is not natural that a clever, worldly man in society, should weary himself taking an *ingénue* to see pieces—I suppose fit for an *ingénue* to see, unless there was some motive, some deeper attraction than friendly interest—a guardian's disinterested care for his ward! No, not were he one hundred years of age, and the rich Miss is an imbecile if she believes it. It is possible she may cherish some scheme of marrying them, and settling her fortune upon them. You English are so curiously romantic."

"But supposing your suspicions reasonable, which I do not believe they are, what could we do for May if she were withdrawn from Mr. Ogilvie's protection?"

"Take her yourself! I will give her employment, she shall help me with my *cours*, and I will give her twelve francs-fifty a week!" cried Mademoiselle Perret, as if she were promising a fortune; "but take my word for it, May is in a very dangerous position."

"I do not think, mademoiselle, you at all realise what Englishmen are!" said Miss Barton solemnly.

"I don't suppose they are better or worse than other men," cried Mademoiselle, "but you are all alike, you English: you say, 'hush, don't mention anything shocking,' and shut your eyes, but the 'shocking' happens all the same. If it is nothing worse, the child may break her heart, when he has had enough of his present innocent amusement, and flies off to something new."

"Come, come, Mademoiselle! This is too much," said Madame Falk. "You excite yourself with your own words. I anticipate no such catastrophe! Take another orange? It is barely a month to Christmas, and then she will come and see us, and you will (with your usual acuteness) soon see whether she is as light-hearted as she used to be, though indeed I am not sure she ever *was* light-hearted."

"You are quite too suspicious, Mademoiselle Perret!" added Miss Barton. "It is the fault of most continental people, they are always expecting evil."

"My anxiety has perhaps carried me too far," began Mademoiselle, "but——" she shook her head sorrowfully, while Miss Barton sniffed, and Madame Falk seemed thoughtful.

"Take a little more Bordeaux, dear mademoiselle," she said, rousing herself. "No? Then call Adrienne, Sarah. If you do not mind, we will stay here, I fancy the fire in the *salon* has gone out."

"But, certainly! your *salle-à-manger* is all one could wish."

Gradually conversation on less exciting subjects was resumed. Mademoiselle Perret was eloquent about a pupil she had trained and with whom Monsieur Duval, the fashionable master of the day, to whose class formerly she had gone for finishing lessons, had expressed himself highly pleased, a little talk about dress, a description of the infamous conduct of the *concierger*, and the little lady, with a glance at the clock, put up the lace she was mending, for French women seldom sit with their hands before them.

"I am keeping you up, dear ladies," she said, "and I have to rise early myself to-morrow!" and she proceeded to wrap herself up. "Oh, I had nearly forgotten to mention that I feel almost sure I saw your friend, that tall gentleman who used to call here when you hurt your wrist last Spring."

"What, Mr. Carr?" cried Miss Barton.

"His name I never knew, but he was tall and fair, and not quite like other Englishmen."

"Yes, you must mean Mr. Carr. He is an Australian, but I don't think you could have seen him. I rather think he is in Constantinople."

Mademoiselle Perret shook her head.

"I rarely mistake any one I have once seen," she said. "This gentleman came from the 'Hotel Splendide,' and called a *fiacre* that is all I know. Good-night, dear friends, a thousand thanks for a delightful evening!"

"She is too obstinate and stupid!" exclaimed Miss Barton, when she returned from seeing their guest to the door. "Isn't she?" she insisted, seeing that Madame Falk was in a brown study.

"Yes, I suppose so," returned that lady. "I hope so; one cannot expect a French woman to take the same views we do—I think she is wrong—I—oh, yes, of course, she is!"

"Why, really, Esther, I believe you have grown French yourself! It is past ten, and I am quite sleepy."

"Go to bed then, Sarah. I am wide awake, so I will write

for a little while. I wish we could afford to have May with us! It is rather cruel to have neither son nor daughter."

"Sometimes it is a good deal more cruel to have them!" said Sarah, with a sniff, as she left the room.

Though Madame Falk wrote far into the night, she was up sometimes, as she wished to prepare her Australian letter with care and thought. It was work she enjoyed. It refreshed her after the dry and dusty chronicle of fashion, dress, and Society gossip, and she had done a good morning's work before her partner summoned her to breakfast, whereat she was very silent.

"You are meditating some dreadful socialist paragraph, Esther!" said Miss Barton, smiling at her preoccupation.

"No, indeed, nor a radical one either! My editor wants me to put in something about women's rights, and I don't feel at all inclined to handle the subject. I can't make up my mind upon it. I see things cannot go on as they were in our young days, and yet those days were so happy, so delightfully full of pleasant illusions and illogical beliefs, that I should personally prefer going back to them than making the biggest stride forward, but I cannot conscientiously preach such a doctrine."

"Then you must just show up the meanness and cowardliness and unreasonableness of men."

"That I will not. I love them! They have always been good to me. Yes; the generality are not particularly noble, but when they are good, there is no mistake about the goodness, and I can tell you there is nothing in the world so delightful as being taken care of by a kind, generous man."

"You mean it is a delight I know nothing about. Well, Esther, I fancy your experience is equally limited."

"Don't be ill-natured, Sarah, let the past rest. I can forgive! God only knows where, in my unhappy case, the responsibility of the offender ceased. Anyhow, nature intended men and women to be friends, and it never answers to contradict nature; there, it is a quarter to one. I shall be quite ready by two or half-past, will you be so good as to take my packet to the post? I had such a hard day yesterday that I shall stay indoors to-day."

"Yes, of course; I want to do some shopping, and it is almost dry under foot."

Madame Falk returned to her den, and silence reigned in the

apartment for a considerable time, till she issued forth, her papers neatly put up and addressed.

"Please, Sarah, have it weighed. I did not stamp it because—ah! there's the bell! Who can it be? everyone knows my day is Sunday."

"The gentleman who was here in the spring, seeks madame," said Adrienne, entering all in smiles, a card in her hand.

"Why it is Mr. Carr," cried Madame Falk; "go and speak to him, while I change my dress and put on a top-knot. This old wrap is not fit to be seen!"

After a speedy toilette, Madame Falk went to receive her visitor. She found him walking to and fro the narrow limits of the salon as he talked to Miss Barton in his strong cheerful voice. He was looking browner and better-looking than when they had last seen him.

"Ah, Madame Falk," he cried joyously, "I am so glad to see you! I know I have no business to come except on Sunday, but I only arrived last night, and I go off to-morrow morning. So you will forgive the intrusion; I wanted so much to see you."

"I think you are very good to come, and I am delighted to see you."

Here Miss Barton took leave and they sat down to talk.

"I fancied you were in Constantinople."

"I was on my way there when I fell in with a very amusing American, who had his yacht at Naples. He took me across to Spain, and then to Marseilles, and there, among the letters forwarded by my bankers, I found one from Conroy asking me to try a few weeks' hunting at Audeley Chase. I thought that was a deuced deal more attractive than Constantinople, so I took the 'rapide' to Paris, and here I am."

After some talk about the Conroys, Madame Zavadoskor, and other mutual acquaintances, Carr asked:

"Is Miss Riddell still at Audeley Chase?"

"No! she left them at the end of September. She has been rather fortunate in finding an engagement with an elderly lady whose sight is weak or imperfect."

"Ah! and what does she do?"

"She reads aloud—and writes for her, and generally helps her."

"Then I suppose Riddell did not leave much."

"Not a farthing! That is, his quarter's income (he had sunk all he possessed in a life annuity) had just come in, and when his few debts, his funeral and the mourning were paid, there were about thirty francs left. Mrs. Conroy was as usual most kind and generous, and May had a nice rest at Audeley Chase. Then there was nothing for her but to go into harness. I can't tell you, Mr. Carr, how terribly we miss her. The place does not seem like home any longer."

"I can imagine it!" cried Carr, rising and taking a turn up and down. "My God! fancy that delicate and refined girl knocking about the world, earning her bread, and a great hulking fellow like me, with his pockets full of money, trying to find out the pleasantest way of spending it!" and he threw himself again into his chair.

"It is a contrast I grant! But, believe me, there is something exhilarating in winning one's own bread, if you are so lucky as to get the chance of winning it! I think May is rather fortunate; she is evidently treated with kindness and consideration. You see, this lady with whom she lives—Miss Macallan—is a relation of Mr. Ogilvie's, who placed her there—you remember Mr. Ogilvie here last spring?"

"Ogilvie placed her there?" in a tone of great surprise. "Why, what the—— I mean what had *he* to do with it?"

"Why, Mr. Carr, did I not tell you, when I wrote, that Mr. Ogilvie was with Mr. Riddell when he met with his fatal accident? It seems that the last words Mr. Riddell spoke were to ask Ogilvie to take care of May."

"He asked Ogilvie! why—had he no relations—or——It seems strange to me——"

"I must say Mr. Ogilvie has been most kind and helpful. I never expected he could have been so nice. I don't know what we should have done without him. You see, as an employé of the British Government, and connected with the Embassy, he could do more than anyone else with the tiresome French officials. Then he went off to Scotland and somewhere else, but he managed to secure this Miss Macallan for May, who really is as happy with her as she could be with anyone, except perhaps, myself," she added with her bright kindly smile. "Pray admire my conceit."

"It is not conceit, it's the truth, Madame Falk!" said Carr

gravely. "I wish you would give me Miss Riddell's address. I suppose I might call and see her? I should like to do so."

"Of course you may! I will write it for you; but if you call I should like to send her a little present, by you."

"So you can! I am at the Hotel Splendide, and will take anything you like!"

"My parcel will not be much—only a few pairs of gloves."

"Very good! but I am obliged to go straight through to Kingsford, for Mr. Conroy tells me he must escort his wife and daughter, to the Riviera before Christmas, so I promised to be with him on Saturday. But I intend to stay a while in London afterwards, and then I shall have the pleasure of handing your parcel to Miss Riddell. Now pray write me the address—while you think of it."

Madame Falk complied, and Carr put the morsel of paper on which it was written in his note-book.

"And are you going back to Australia in the spring?"

"I rather think not. There is so much to see in these grand old countries. My plans are all unsettled. In short, I have thrown the reins on the neck of the future, and will go where it takes me."

A little more talk about Madame Falk's new line of work a little argument (as was usual between them) respecting politics and principles, and Carr took his departure.

"That's a capital woman," was his reflection, as he descended the stairs. "For though she does man's work, she is every inch a woman."

"He is an honest young fellow!" mused Madame Falk. "But already corrupted by riches. He would keep down the working man, and he cannot see the educational value of political rights."

* * * * *

In London the weeks had flown with wondrous speed for May Riddell since Ogilvie's appearance on the scene. He generally spent the greater part of Sunday with his relative in Granby Road. That is, he came to luncheon and, if fine, took May on some expedition by road or rail; if wet, to some church to hear either fine music or fine preaching—no matter if Protestant, Catholic, or any other of the seven hundred and fourteen denominations said to be registered within the borders of

the great city. But the crowning benefit bestowed by this most considerate guardian was the instruction in music which he insisted on procuring for her.

At first with blushes and hesitation, yet with some persistence, she urged that she had no right to accept so costly a benefit from him. He however was still more persistent. He urged that the teacher he selected, though capable, was as yet unknown and therefore moderate in his charges, that he was a young man in whom he (Ogilvie) took an interest and was anxious to serve, so in engaging him to teach his ward, he was doing a service to both for the same cost. May therefore gave in, as she always did, and greatly profited by the instruction.

The only person not completely satisfied by the arrangement was Miss Macallan herself.

Ogilvie had in a private interview insisted on his cousin being present at the lessons.

"What's the good?" she asked.

"I do not suppose there is any real necessity," he returned in a hard, commanding tone—very different from the voice to which May was accustomed. "But considering the views entertained by society, it is right that Miss Riddell should have a chaperon present—at all events, I desire it."

This form of expression was generally used by Ogilvie when he wished to clinch an argument with Miss Macallan, and he had never found it to fail.

"It's not just the pleasantest way to pass an hour, that ought to be between lights; instead of resting one's eyes with forty winks, to be blinking in that big drawing-room, with the two candles on the piano, listening to all that skirling up and down," was her confidential remark to her prime minister.

"Eh, Jessie, my woman. She's a nice douce girlic, but nothing so verra remarkable. Mark my words, she has a big fortune waiting her somewhere, and my kinsman knows all about it; he's a cunning chiel, and small blame to him."

"May be so, mem, an' I'm sure if the young leddy has thousands and thousands she might be proud to tak' him. He is a grand gentleman, but to my thinking more like a father than a lover."

"Hoot-toot, Jessie. What do you know about it?"

"Weel, mem, it's just what every woman high and low *does* ken."

"Anyhow I'm getting on fine with my socks for the Kirk Christmas sale, and Miss Riddell is doing a shawl just beautiful." Thus Miss Macallan.

Ogilvie, with the fatherly interest perceived by the lynx-eyed Jessie, was careful to acquaint himself with the progress made by his ward. And often came of an evening after his dinner (for the Granby Road *cuisine* did not exactly suit him) to hear May sing. On these occasions Miss Macallan naturally spared herself the additional "skirling," coming in for a few minutes to ask if the coffee which May had taught Jessie to make was to her kinsman's "liking." "There's no use in me staying to listen to all the havers they talk," she said to herself "about books and pictures and out-o'-the-way things, not a word of sound doctrine amongst it all.

Her absence was not much noticed by either of the interlocutors as they rambled from subject to subject between May's songs, nor was she averse to hold her own in opposition to her guide, philosopher and friend.

She was too frank, too honest, to be afraid of making mistakes or seeming foolish; so from these discussions she received a greater amount of education than she was aware. Then the books he lent her were interesting and awakening. Altogether it was a heavenly time for May, sprinkled as it was with occasional visits to the best theatres and, when the weather permitted, expeditions to places worth seeing in the neighbourhood of the town.

"You are really making progress, May," said Ogilvie one evening some little time after the date of Carr's visit to Madame Falk, when he had asked for one song after another. "I don't mean to say you will ever be anything remarkable, but you sing in perfect tune, which is rare, and you have expression; you might have more, if you would let yourself go. I fancy there are possibilities of passion under the soft-snow of your exterior!"

"That I do not know—but I hope I may learn Signor G——'s method—it is very like Mademoiselle Perret's—I might then be able to teach, which would be a great help to me, for I cannot expect Miss Macallan to keep me always."

"Nor, I imagine, would you like to stay," observed Ogilvie.

"Yes, I should, so long as you are in London and able to

come and see me ; otherwise—well, I should like to go back to Paris.”

“So you find me not a bad sort of chum?” he returned, resting his elbow on the table, and shading his eyes with his hand.

“I do not think there is any one else quite like you—at least, I never met anyone the least like you. But, of course, you cannot be here always—nor can you come always so often.”

“No, unfortunately ; the private secretaryship would be the thing, eh, May?”

“Ah, yes. I wish it could be.”

There was a pause during which May knitted diligently.

Then she ventured to say : “I heard a lady, Mrs. Montgomery, at Audeley Chase say that you might go to Japan.”

“Did she? How the deuce did she hear that? Well, there was some talk of it, but I do not want to go. In fact, I have perambulated the earth long enough. I want to stay in England, and if possible have a finger in the management of this tight little island.”

“I should like to hear you speak in the House of Commons,” said May.

“You would be exceedingly disappointed then, I have no gift of eloquence. There are some obstacles, however ; I am not rich enough for free action.”

“I thought you were well off, if not very rich.”

Ogilvie laughed. “I am considerably better off than I was, my sweet friend,” he said. “I have quite enough to jog along comfortably, but I am not quite satisfied with that sort of life. You see, I confide in you, though you are rather young to be the recipient of confidence from a battered worldling like myself.”

“Your heart is kind and fresh still,” said May quietly.

“It is a good deal fresher than I imagined,” murmured Ogilvie as if to himself.

“At all events,” May went on, “you may be sure I will never repeat a word you say.”

“No, I do not suppose you will—but I want you to promise more. I want you never to mention me, in your conversation or your letters, to Frances Conroy, or to Madame Falk, or anyone.”

"Very well—I promise—but, Mr. Ogilvie, I have often mentioned you to Madame Falk. I told her how kind you were—how you had given me music lessons, and many other things."

"Ah! Then pray be satisfied with the eulogiums you have already penned, and do not mention me any more; let me rest in the shade like a beautiful flower."

"Very well," said May with a smile. "I shall remember."

There was another pause, during which Ogilvie watched May's fingers, which swiftly yet quietly plied the needles.

"I met Madame Laldeschi when I was at Marseilles, and we had quite a long talk."

"Madame Laldeschi?" repeated May. "I don't think I know her."

"You have seen her. Do you remember a tall lady in grey at the Zavadoskor ball?"

"Yes, a lady with a charming sad face. I remember her quite well, you said you respected her!"

"That is Madame von Nierhoff. She is a charming good woman. She was taking one of poor Laldeschi's daughters, a very delicate girl, to Nice for the winter. The mother was kept in Paris by business."

"You said she was their dear friend."

"She was their providence, but she had been Laldeschi's great friend originally, she was his most faithful confidant and assistant, all through the Italian troubles. Then, being poor, considering his rank, he was obliged to marry the countess for her fortune; he was a very good husband, I believe, and his wife is greatly attached to Madame von Nierhoff."

"I do not think if I had been his wife," began May, "I should have liked——"

Her further speech was interrupted by the entrance of Miss Macallan.

"Good evening, Cousin Ogilvie, I could not come in before. The minister of our kirk just stepped in to ask my opinion respecting the children's treat at Christmas-time, and as such-like things are not exactly in your line, I stayed to hear him. How was the coffee?——" and the privacy of the evening was over.

CHAPTER XVII.

"A LITTLE CLOUD."

FRANCES CONROY was not a satisfactory correspondent—sometimes she wrote a couple of letters in quick succession, and then weeks would go by before she broke silence; May always wrote at regular intervals, and told her friend of the routine of her simple life, but even before Ogilvie had warned her she was instinctively cautious in mentioning him, as he had perhaps unconsciously impressed her with the idea that he hated being gossiped about.

She was grieved to find that Mrs. Conroy had taken cold, and though they had found a pretty villa, and the invalid wished very much to remain through the winter near her friends, she was imperatively ordered abroad.

May, therefore, expected them to pass through London, and looked every morning for a letter, telling her where to call and enjoy a talk with her good friends, before they departed for some southern health resort.

Three or four days passed, however, and none came, nor had Ogilvie paid his usual evening visit.

On the Monday following the conversation detailed in the last chapter, a note from him awaited her on the breakfast-table.

It was dated the previous Saturday, and bore the address "Rockborough Castle, near Greystone, Yorkshire."

"DEAR MAY,

"I have been called suddenly from Town, but shall return before Saturday next. Should you want anything, a letter to this address will find me. I hope you practise diligently and will make great strides in my absence.

"Always yours,

"P. OGILVIE."

Then it would be a whole week before she should see him. How intolerably long the time would seem!

She told Miss Macallan, who said :

"Rockborough Castle—that is some grand place! Let me see, I have a fine book about the country seats of the nobility and gentry, my poor dear brother used to read in it, and make long calculations about the value of these pleasure-places being lost to the nation. He was wonderful strong in figures! Agatha!" to the younger servant, who was adding water to the tea-pot, "go into the back-parlour, and bring me a big brown and gold book, that lies on the little table in the window."

The girl obeyed.

Miss Macallan put on her spectacles, opened the huge volume, and drew her finger down the index.

"Ay, here it is: 'Rockborough Castle, Yorkshire, the seat of the Right Honourable the Earl of Shelbourne.' Yes, Cousin Ogilvie knows a grand lot of fine people."

"Shelbourne," repeated May, "I have seen that name in the paper, I am sure."

"He is one of the Ministers, I am thinking," observed Miss Macallan, and she went on with her breakfast.

As soon as the cloth was removed, May proceeded to perform almost the only duty demanded by her employer, which was to read the newspaper.

Glancing through it to find the horrors, that always interested her hearer, her eye caught a morsel of fashionable intelligence.

"The Secretary for Foreign 'Affairs, who has been suffering from severe bronchial cold, remains at Rockborough Castle for a few days longer, and has benefited by the change of air."

"Lord Shelbourne is the Foreign Secretary," she said, and read aloud the paragraph.

"Ah! just so," remarked Miss Macallan. "He'll be sent as ambassador somewhere one of these days himself, you'll see—I mean my Cousin Ogilvie."

"Very likely indeed," thought May, and through all her reading aloud, a sort of melancholy refrain sounded in her heart. "He will be sent somewhere far away, and these pleasant days will pass, never to return."

"Are you quite yourself this morning, my dear? You are just reading as if you didn't understand the words before

you?" asked Miss Macallan, looking up from her thirty-fourth sock.

"Thank you, I am quite well, only a little more stupid than usual."

"Well, you needn't read any more now. I am going downstairs to Jessie; she is making a Christmas bun to-day, and would you please write for two tons of coal—mind you say ready money, so they must put the net price on the bill, and there's the grocery order for the Civil Service Stores, after that you may go skirl to your heart's content."

"Thank you"—laughing—"I shall put off my skirling till after dinner. I want to write to Madame Falk, I have not heard from her for such a long time."

Miss Macallan left the room, and May sat down to her writing—she did not get on rapidly, however. The idea of losing Ogilvie's society, his care, his encouragement, was positively appalling. The delight of being valuable to him as a friend, almost a confidant, was infinitely flattering, infinitely sweet. It raised her in her own estimation. He was the only creature who seemed to recognise what she felt to be true, that she had some sense, some taste, some perception. Madame Falk, kind and sympathetic as she was, treated her as a good, gentle, and rather unhappy child, as if she were still what she had been six years ago, for she was too busy to be able to observe much, but Ogilvie looked upon her as a friend, almost an equal. He who was so experienced, so intellectual, so in every way superior, how was she to bear her everyday, common-place life if she were never to see him? To this question she sought in vain for an answer.

"There's a gentleman seeking you!" exclaimed Jessie, offering May a card, and looking very cross at being called away from her cooking because Agatha was upstairs.

"Mr. Carr!" cried May, starting up, and going towards the door to meet him as he entered; "how very glad I am to meet you, and how good you are to come all this way!"

Carr's face lit up with a pleasant, gratified smile at her cordial greeting.

"Good to myself," he said. "I only came up to Town last night from Audeley Chase, and I must apologise for this early visit but I have various engagements in the afternoon, and early

to-morrow I go out of Town for a few days; you will excuse me?"

"Indeed I do! It seems as if dear Madame Falk must be coming, too, you are so associated with her in my mind. Did you see her before you left. She mentioned that you were going to the Chase, but that was some little time ago."

"Yes; I paid her a long visit, she seemed as well and as bright as ever—misses you awfully, she says. Indeed, the place does not look itself without you. Madame Falk is very anxious to know how you are, and if you are comfortable."

"If you see her again you must set her mind at rest on that score. Few girls who are companions are so kindly treated and so free as I am." She stopped abruptly, for she could hardly stop the words, "and we see Mr. Ogilvie very often," which were on the very tip of her tongue when the recollection of his dislike to being gossiped about arrested them.

"I must say," considering her with grave attention, "that you are looking uncommonly well. But, somehow, you are changed, you seem less shy, less cold, and older; excuse my free speech, you know I always felt at home with you."

"How can you expect me to forgive you for saying I look older?" returned May, with a grave, sweet smile, which struck Carr as very charming.

"Yes, I do. You would, if I could express *how* you seem older. I am always rather an inarticulate sort of fellow."

"Are you? I have not found you inarticulate. Now, tell me, how is Miss Barton?"

"I only saw her for a few moments. She is the same as ever. Just as porcupiny! Perhaps I ought not to say so to you."

"Perhaps not. But I understand. Believe me, there is a heart under the quills. I used to think she did not like me; indeed, I do not think she likes any one except her cousin. But in my time of need she was wonderfully kind to me. How I should like to go back to them, only——"

"Then, why don't you?" interrupted Carr eagerly. "I'll escort you. I've nothing to keep me anywhere, or take me anywhere. You and I are not conventional. This seems a dull hole. You must be moped to death."

"I am not, indeed. Then, you see I have an employment here; it is by no means sure I should find any in Paris."

"You are wonderfully plucky," admiringly.

"I am afraid I cannot accept that praise. My way has been wonderfully smoothed for me."

"I suppose you see Ogilvie sometimes?" asked Carr, looking keenly at her.

"Oh, yes. He is exceedingly good in caring for me. Miss Macallan, the lady of the house, is his cousin. She is wonderfully Scotch, and very considerate to me."

"And what do you do all day? I must be prepared at all points for Madame Falk's questions."

May gave him a short sketch of her life in Granby Road, including her singing lessons.

"I did not know you sang!" he exclaimed. "I should like to hear you."

"Mine is a very feeble kind of singing. Mr. Ogilvie thinks that, although I shall never do much, if I understand how to sing I can teach, which will be very useful for me."

"Oh, that's what Ogilvie thinks, is it!" Then with an abrupt change, "I am afraid Mrs. Conroy is very delicate. There was a letter from the daughter yesterday, and Mr. Conroy started off at once to make arrangements about her journey to the Riviera, that is the reason I left."

"Dear Mrs. Conroy," began May, when the door opened, and Miss Macallan, in her best shot silk, and afternoon cap, her curls freshly and stiffly rolled at either side of her face, and black lace mittens on her bony hands.

Carr rose and made his best bow.

"This gentleman is a friend of Mrs. Conroy's," said May, "whom I used to know in Paris. Mr. Carr—Miss Macallan."

"Oh, indeed! I'm pleased to see you, sir; pray, sit down."

Carr obeyed. An awful pause ensued.

"The weather is varra changeable," remarked Miss Macallan, at last.

"Well, yes; but not as bad as I expected. I never was in England at this time of the year before."

"But you are not a Frenchman, I am thinking?"

"No. I came from Australia."

"Eh, but that's a long way. I suppose you have come to settle in England, though you look rather young to have made your fortune?"

"Thank you," he returned, smiling. "I hope to return to my Australian home as soon as I have seen a little more of Europe. I have promised to see Miss Riddell, and take a report of her to some very particular friends of hers in Paris. I must say you seem to have taken excellent care of Miss Riddell. I never saw her look so well. But I confess I had a sort of commission to steal her away from you if I could. Her old friend Madame Falk is very anxious to have Miss Riddell with her for a short time, if you can spare her."

"Well, she'll no have her!" interrupted Miss Macallan. "Why she hasn't been in my house three months yet, and her guardian placed her under my care, so here she must stay."

"Is Ogilvie really your guardian?" asked Carr.

"He is so good as to consider himself my guardian," said May. "But I have no right whatever to expect a guardian's care from him."

"Just so!" chimed in Miss Macallan. "It is not every girlie that has a man like him—a fine, rising man, that will be an ambassador one of these days—to look after her and think of every little thing, and come out of an evening, wet or dry, after the work of the day, to hear her sing, and see if she's profiting by the instruction he is giving her. She cannot be grateful enough, I tell her."

"I *am* very grateful," said May quietly.

"Yes. It is quite remarkable," ejaculated Carr.

"Yes, that's just what it is," said Miss Macallan, emphatically.

"Well, Miss Riddell," said Carr rising, "I have overstayed the limits of a merely polite visit. When I return next week may I call again? I have stupidly forgotten a parcel Madame Falk entrusted to me. I shall certainly bring it next time."

"Ah, yes! pray come. I shall be so pleased, and I shall have a little packet for my dear, good friends, if you will take it for me. Pray, let me have a post-card, that I may be at home."

"Thank you very much. I shall not fail to let you know. Good-bye, Miss Riddell; good-bye, Miss Macallan."

He left the room, followed by May, who never thought of ringing the bell in the proper style. She therefore exchanged another good-bye, which Carr supplemented with a whispered "She looks awfully grim."

"Weel," said Miss Macallan, who was more than ever con-

vinced that May had a big fortune awaiting her somewhere, "I don't know much about the ways of the world as it is now, but I don't think it is quite the thing for a young leddy to go out to the door alone, to say a last good-bye to a young man, and a varra good-looking young man."

"But, Miss Macallan, am I not to show him civility because he happens to be nice?" asked May laughing.

"That is not just the right kind of answer to give me," said Miss Macallan sternly. "Moreover, I minded that you told the young man you would stay at home for him if he wrote you, which is not exactly the reserve of a modest maiden. I am no that sure your guardian, Mr. Ogilvie, would quite approve!"

"I am sure he would not disapprove," said May, surprised and amused, yet a little nettled. "My guardian knows Mr. Carr very well. He knows, too, that Mr. Carr used to be often at the Conroys' and Madame Falk's; dear Miss Macallan, there is nothing wrong or remarkable in Mr. Carr writing to say he will come and see me! It is quite funny that you should think so," and she laughed in a frank, amused way that made Miss Macallan see that she was rather making a mountain of a mole-hill.

"Varra weel!" she said deliberately, "Young women are not what they used to be, and I suppose I do not know the difference between right and wrong—any way, I hope you'll tell Mr. Ogilvie of this visit."

"Yes, of course, I shall!" cried May. "It will be something to talk about when he comes back."

"I can't say you seem to have any lack of things to talk about," returned Miss Macallan dryly; and feeling somehow that she had not scored in this slight passage of arms, she betook herself to the kitchen, and covering her gorgeous shot silk with a cook's apron, she lent a scientific hand to the preparation of a very elaborate Christmas bun.

May was greatly pleased to see Carr again. He was associated in her mind with the first few happy days she had known since she awoke (and how soon she was awakened) to the fact that she had neither value nor importance in her father's eyes, that she was in truth a profitless, costly burden, though in public he always treated her with caressing politeness.

Then Madame Falk's compassionate kindness had been the first balm poured into her wounds, and the deep sense of

gratitude called forth by that good woman still burned as warmly in her heart as the first moment that Madame Falk's hearty kiss had set it alight in her chilled, starved heart.

But it was only last spring that the delicious conviction had grown upon her that other people began to find her neither dull nor insignificant.

Carr had always been friendly and ready to talk to her, or dance with her, and how delightfully he danced! She had deeply enjoyed that ball at the Zavadoskoj Hotel.

It was there, too, that Ogilvie first began to treat her as if she were somehow different from others, as if she were a creature he could speak to on equal terms. It seemed to her that she had never really lived before that period of emancipation.

Yes, she was indeed very glad to see Carr, yet it disturbed her to have all these memories so suddenly evoked, and now was this short space of brightness to be clouded over by the "blackness of darkness?" If Ogilvie was to be despatched to the other side of the world, what was to become of her? She did not feel able to answer that terrible question within the narrow limits of the house, and leaving word that she had gone to walk in Kensington Gardens, as she had a slight headache, May wrapped herself up and was soon in the open air.

No, it would be impossible, she acknowledged to herself, to go on living with Miss Macallan. There was an indescribable sordidness about life in Granby Road, and absence of everything approaching interest, yet what could she do?—here, at least, her material wants were provided for; could she be sure of earning sufficient for that purpose if she went to Paris? For if she lost Ogilvie, her only refuge would be with Madame Falk, and she had no right to burden that generous woman more than she was already burdened. Perhaps her guardian, as she generally called him in her mental discussions, had some such idea in his head, when he insisted on her taking singing lessons. As this thought presented itself to her mind a shiver ran through her. It flashed across her how utterly her whole being had entwined itself round him. Was it not appalling to find that the possibility of happiness or wretchedness hung on so mere a thread as the chance of his being kept in London or sent abroad, for if it were merely across

the Channel it would effectually be separation. Then she saw that this grave calm, guardian was all the world to her—that she loved him with all the force of her deep, tender heart. She did not shrink from the discovery. Why should she not love him? True, he was not likely to give her such affection as filled her soul; he was not a character to have such a feeling or develop it, but as long as he gave her the considerate friendship, the delicious sympathy he had already so abundantly bestowed, that was enough—quite enough. Her own love for him would be a sweet secret between herself and her heart. None need ever know it—Ogilvie least of all. He did not want marriage or domestic ties. What he wanted was an utterly devoted friend whose ear was ever ready to hear, and whose understanding was not unequal to comprehend his difficulties, his aims,—to whom he could speak as to a second self and whose whole soul was his, as no man friend's could be. Was this not a noble task for any woman? It seemed completely satisfying to May, only she prayed not to be parted from him. What news would he bring back with him from this visit to the Foreign Minister? She did not at all dread meeting him. She had no fear of betraying herself, his calmness would keep her composed. Indeed, though strong and profound, she felt that her love was like a deep, abounding river, the surface of which was so smooth and unbroken from its own fulness that none might guess the force of the current.

This long commune with self seemed to revive her courage. Something seemed to tell her that Ogilvie would not leave England, at all events, he would return on Saturday, and on Sunday she should certainly see him; that thought was enough to send golden edges to the dark cloud lowering over her at present, and she returned much more hopeful and at the same time resigned to confront the reproachful looks of Miss Macallan, for May was ten minutes late for dinner.

"I am so sorry!" she exclaimed apologetically. "I had no idea how the time was going."

"Haven't you a watch?"

"Yes, but I seldom wear it."

"More's the pity! It's just a mercy we have Scotch broth for dinner, and they can stand any amount of cooking. Do you have a lesson this afternoon?"

"Yes, Miss Macallan, instead of to-morrow. Signor G—— has been a little irregular lately."

"You light the fire in the drawing-room, then," to the girl who was waiting, "and don't unroll the hearth-rug till it's well lit."

"I will attend to the fire; I am going to practise before my lesson."

"The walk has given you a bit colour in your cheeks," said Miss Macallan, looking at her. "It's a pity you cannot keep it there, for it makes almost a bonnie lass of you."

"Whereas in my true colours, which are rather pallid, I am anything but 'bonnie,'" said May good-humouredly.

"I will not say that exactly," returned Miss Macallan, "but after all, handsome is, that handsome does."

"Yes, that is the best sort of beauty," said May, as she left the room to attend to the drawing-room fire, and prepare for her lesson.

* * * * *

The rest of the week went fast enough. May could always find occupation; besides, the weather was fine, crisp and bright, permitting of out-door exercise.

Ogilvie did not write, and May, always careful not to trouble him with unnecessary letters, sent no reply to his, as it did not seem to want one. Saturday came at last. The previous evening came a note from Carr.

"I shall have the pleasure of calling to-morrow afternoon—should you be engaged, pray mention when I may find you."

May did not feel it necessary to communicate this note to Miss Macallan.

That lady was going out, though not to shop. For a wonder she had been invited to luncheon with a Scotch family with whom at long intervals she had exchanged visits for some years, and who resided at Hampstead.

It was therefore a serious undertaking. She had her breakfast half an hour earlier than usual. She made elaborate provision for the needs of the ensuing Sabbath, and left a whole string of directions with the faithful Jessie. In short, it wanted but a quarter to twelve when she got under weigh.

May, with her ready politeness, put on her hat and cloak to

escort her to the omnibus, and took the opportunity to buy a few flowers on her homeward way, in order to beautify the drawing-room, and so assist in presenting her present abode in the most favourable light. Then she put on her best dress—her second-best was getting a little worn—but, thank Heaven! she would be able to replace it after Christmas. How delightful it was to earn money, though she certainly would be glad to do a little more for her employer. She could not be quite worth what she cost, and it puzzled her to account for Miss Macallan's willingness to maintain an unnecessary mouth. It was a contradiction to all her other characteristics. "Nor does she care much for me," thought May, "though she is nice and civil enough. Indeed, I am ashamed to find that I would not be grieved to part with her for ever." So thinking she sat down to the piano, and began to play some of the airs she had picked up by ear. She had placed the piano across a corner from whence the door could be seen.

She had not been dreaming over her music long when Carr arrived, armed with Madame Falk's parcel—a delightful quantity of hot-house flowers, loose, and pinned up in white paper. May was charmed and grateful; she demanded water and a tray at once, and set about filling what bowls and vases she could find with deft fingers.

Carr sat watching her, highly pleased. He found his silent, quiet friend of the Rue Vielle Cour greatly changed, and yet the same in her gentle movements, her readiness to listen rather than to speak, and a certain reposeful harmony expressed both in face and figure. Against these old traits were to be balanced greater freedom and fluency of speech and increased warmth and frankness of manner. Her cordial and unaffected reception of himself pleased him immensely. Carr was really fond of women. He liked their society, he believed in them, but he was not given to fall in love indiscriminately.

Madame Zavadoskor had roused a degree of fiery admiration, in which there was little or no esteem, but of sentimental love he had known little or nothing. Now he watched May moving to and fro, and arranging her flowers with a delicious sense of being soothed, of being thoroughly at home. She was fairer than she used to be. Always pale, there was now the faintest tinge of colour in her face, a greater depth of blue or grey, or

hazel, he could not tell which, in her eyes, but he was quite sure about the expression, the sort of sad, questioning look which was habitual, but now often varied by a smiling or serious glance, as if she gave you her earnest attention. Her figure was still slim, but not so thin as it used to be, while her very simple dress, drawn in folds from the shoulder to the waist, seemed to him wonderfully graceful, and her throat looked snowy white as it rose above the black crape frill that finished her corsage. As he gazed at her admiringly they talked easily of their Parisian memories; and Carr gave her the latest news of Mrs. Conroy—she was a little better, but her husband was anxious to hasten her departure to a milder climate. They would probably pass through town next week.

“And are you really happy here?” said Carr, after a pause.

“I am, indeed. Why do you ask?”

“Because that Miss What-do-ye-call-em looks as if she was made of stone, flint! I cannot fancy your being happy with her.”

“I assure you she is very nice to me, I have nothing to complain of.”

“It must be perfectly awful living the same round day after day; you would be ever so much better off in Paris.”

May shook her head.

“I must stay where I am for the present. I have a good deal to interest me. I like my singing lessons.”

“Ah, by-the-way! Do let me hear you sing. I remember your singing with Miss Conroy, ages ago—that is, last spring, and I thought you had a very sweet voice. Do sing me a song; I love music—in a rude uncultivated manner.”

“If you care to hear, I shall be happy to sing for you, but I have but little voice, and Mr. Ogilvie says I shall never do much with it.”

“Does he? Oh, well you know, he is a hypercritical, snuff-the-moon sort of fellow. I am much more easily pleased.”

May sat down and sang a simple ballad, sweetly and tenderly. At the end of the first verse Carr came over from his seat by the fire, and leant on the piano, charmed and touched by the pathos of her voice. The song was not yet quite finished, when the door opened and Ogilvie entered unannounced and paused on the threshold contemplating the tableau before him with a look in his eyes and on his brow and mouth, such as May had never

seen there before, a look that sent a shiver of painful anticipation through her veins. It was gone in a second and replaced by an expression of icy composure as he advanced into the room.

"Mr. Ogilvie," exclaimed May, rising to meet him and growing very white, Carr observed: "I did not expect you would return so soon."

"Yes, I am a little sooner than I expected," he said, just touching the hand she offered.

"Mr. Carr! I had no idea you were in Town, I heard you were at the Conroys'; hope you had good sport there."

Carr replied, and a somewhat constrained conversation ensued—some sudden paralysing cloud seemed to have fallen upon them, some sinister influence seemed to emanate from Ogilvie, who spoke formally on various ordinary topics, enquired for Madame Falk, and only once addressed May, when he asked if Miss Macallan was at home.

Carr endeavoured in vain to be bright and cordial, but some spell had fallen upon him.

"Where are you putting up?" said Ogilvie to Carr, after a short pause.

"At the 'Grand,' it is very central and convenient."

"Do you make any stay?"

"No, not now, I shall run over to Paris next week, and," turning to May, "you spoke of having a parcel or package for Madame Falk. May I call for it on Monday or Tuesday?"

"Miss Riddell will forward it to you on Monday. It is quite unnecessary to bring you all this way when your engagements are no doubt numerous. The parcel shall be sent," said Ogilvie, in tones so harsh and decided that the sentence sounded like forbidding him the house.

"I can perfectly well come here for it—if Miss Riddell will permit me," began Carr quickly.

"Thank you very much," interrupted May, "but as Mr. Ogilvie says, I can send it quite well."

"Oh, by all means," returned Carr, in a rather peculiar tone, "but when I come back to London after Christmas, I shall certainly pay you a visit and bring you the latest news. Madame Falk will be delighted to have my report, and for the present I must say good-bye."

"Good-bye! and thank you very much for coming to see me," said May.

"Yes, it was quite a friendly act," added Ogilvie, with an unpleasant smile, and he followed the visitor downstairs with ceremonious politeness, and May remained standing by the fire, a curious dread of coming unpleasantness pressing on her spirit, instead of its being buoyant with the joy, the exhilaration of Ogilvie's return.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"A GLEAM OF LIGHT."

WHEN Ogilvie returned, he walked straight to the fireplace, and stood at the side farthest from May, gazing at the flames for a full minute—and May, feeling unaccountably nervous, could wait no longer.

"I did not hope to see you before to-morrow," she said, looking up in his face with a timid smile.

"Very probably," returned Ogilvie drily, "I only arrived this morning, having caught the night mail at Greystone and after a busy day; I made a push to see you before dinner, as I am dining out."

"It is very good of you to come, but you are always good."

"Thank you," still in the same dry tone. "Pray how is it that Carr made his way here?" turning suddenly to her with searching angry eyes, while the light from the gas-brackets at either side of the mantelpiece fell upon his face, and showed the set, displeased expression that contracted his brow.

"Why Madame Falk must have given him my address when she asked him to take the parcel, but he forgot to bring it on Monday—so——"

"He was here on Monday too! Why did you not let me know?"

"If I had written to you I should certainly have mentioned it, but I never thought of troubling you with a letter merely to say that. Some time ago, when Madame Falk told me he was going to Audeley Chase, I repeated it to you."

"At all events, Carr evidently knew how to make his second visit fit in with Miss Macallan's rather unusual absence from the house."

"But, Mr. Ogilvie, he could have known nothing about it! Miss Macallan had arranged to pay her visit to Hampstead before I had Mr. Carr's note, saying he would come to-day."

"Ha! He wrote to make the appointment then?"

"Yes, I asked him to write. I should have been so vexed to miss him. Why do you question me in this strange way? Why are you displeased?"

There was a degree of quiet dignity in May's look and manner which recalled Ogilvie to common-sense and self-control.

"Forgive me, May," he said, walking towards the door and back again. "I have been hasty, perhaps, but an inexperienced girl like yourself, especially one so divested of natural protectors, needs to be extra careful of her conduct, and—and of the sort of men she admits to her intimacy. I do not mean to say that Carr is a bad man, as men go, but I don't want him to boast that you received him alone!"

"Mr. Carr boast of being received by *me*!" repeated May, with a natural, unaffected laugh. "I hope he will have some better reason for boasting—if he ever boasts—which I do not think he does."

"You have a high opinion of Carr?" returned Ogilvie, leaning his shoulder against the end of the mantelshelf, and fixing his eyes on hers as if he would read her thoughts.

May met them fully; the suspicion they expressed nerved her to bear his gaze, as she could not have done had they questioned her tenderly.

"I do not know Mr. Carr well enough to have any distinct opinion about him, but he is nice and kind, and has a pleasant, frank, youthful air that I like, but probably I shall never see him again."

"Why not? he will no doubt return to London, and equally without doubt call upon you."

"I do not think he will, when you have so plainly shown him that you do not wish it."

"Did I?" said Ogilvie, amazed at the composure of her tone. "Well, I do *not* wish him to come here—it is much better he should not. A man like him, accustomed to indulge in every whim, with a huge fortune, it is incongruous, it is unfit."

"Why?" asked May very quietly. "What are his whims or

his fortune to me? I only know him as a friendly stranger, who can never go out of my life because he never came into it! Why do you trouble yourself about him? If you think it worth while to ask me not to receive Mr. Carr, I will not see him. I do not care to vex my best friend for the sake of a mere acquaintance, only I will *not* be rude to him."

Ogilvie paused before he replied. He had rarely felt so annoyed with himself. He felt he had made a mistake, and shown his hand dangerously at least; had May been more experienced and worldly she would have seen a good deal too much.

"Thank you, my dear ward, for the confidence you show in me; I think I deserve it," he said, at length, in a deliberate voice. "You must remember there are many social matters which men understand better than women, even experienced women, which you cannot claim to be! Yes, May, I believe I am your best friend. I do not think any one else takes the profound interest in you that I do; give me your complete trust in return, I ask no more."

"You have it—you know you have," murmured May; there was a tremor in her voice that sent a thrill through his veins. Last week she would have seconded her words by holding out her hand to him, to-day something forbade the action.

But Ogilvie settled the matter by taking the chill little hand in one of his, and then laying the other over it. "You are cold," he said, pressing it closely and tenderly, "and I have annoyed you; you think me suspicious and ill-tempered."

"I think you are unjust," she said, "but it is not of much consequence; only do not be cross again, it makes me unhappy."

A quick, deep sigh heaved Ogilvie's breast. "God knows, I only ask to make you happy," he said in a low tone.

"Well, so far, you have succeeded," she returned, with a smiling upward glance, as she gently withdrew her hand.

"Now," she resumed, "tell me of your visit to the great man; is Lord Shelbourne going to send you to the ends of the earth?"

"Well, no—nor should I have gone if he had. I would rather quit the service than quit England just now. I have a good deal of work before me. The government has got hold of a lot of papers in Russian which may be of importance—so instead of giving them to the ordinary interpreters I am to have the honour

of deciphering and translating them. There—there is another state secret for you to keep. You see you had better know as little as possible of me and my movements.”

“I never do!” said May, while her heart beat fast as the question arose in her mind, “Can it be possible that he stays in England for my sake?” and this possibility sent a wave of roseate colour for one fleeting moment over Life in all its aspects.

“No!” returned Ogilvie. “I know you do not. A woman—I prefer calling you a woman, young as you are—a woman who is absolutely safe, and there are some, though they are rare, is the most delicious friend in the world—and the most useful.”

“I should like to play mouse to your lion in the toils, though not even for that gratification would I wish you to be in difficulties,” said May, who was once more at her ease and happy.

Ogilvie did not reply.

May, who had taken up some needlework, plied her needle in silence.

“I suppose Miss Macallan would think me very remiss if I did not come and see her to-morrow?”

“I am sure she would.”

“Then I will come after luncheon, and afterwards, if it is fine, we—we will go somewhere. Then I must hear you sing—for—” looking at his watch, “I must go back to every-day life.” A little more talk of the Conroys and what Mr. Conroy had said of his wife’s health when Ogilvie had met him that morning in Whitehall, and he took his leave.

“We are as fast friends as ever, are we not, May? You forgive me for fancying you had any leaven of that infernal coquetry which degrades and destroys most women?”

“I forgive you, certainly. But whether I have any coquetry in me neither you nor I know. It has never been called forth.”

“Do you know you sometimes startle me by suggesting that I by no means know you thoroughly yet.”

“Well, I think you do. Good-bye, till to-morrow.”

It was a dry, clear evening, and Ogilvie walked quickly towards town, as no hansom presented itself for some little time. He was glad of a few minutes’ thought to examine his position, for he had been profoundly mortified by his own sudden failure under fire, as he considered his loss of self-control. And for what? He now felt convinced that May was also absolutely innocent

of any coquetry or design as regarded Carr. What a fool he had made of himself !

"I have staked more than I intended on this game," he said to himself, "but it is intensely interesting. How I am ever to do without this tender shadowy 'friendship,' I don't exactly see. Yet the whole affair bristles with difficulties. May is no common-place woman. I doubt if any one save herself can throw dust in her eyes. Will she play Dustman in my favour ? I dare not make love to her *yet*, and she seems perfectly content with the Dummy of friendship. Until I feel sure that she *is* in love with me, I dare not show my hand, even if she is—and with all my experience I cannot tell. It will not be an easy task to bring her into my views. This infernal good-looking bush-ranger turning up too ! It was enough to unsteady any man's nerve to see him bending over her, and think of his advantages ! Young, wealthy, undazzled by European life, with his quixotic ideas, he is quite capable of marrying her, and carrying her off to a soul-less life among the kangaroos. But love or no love, I think I have influence enough to stop that. Well, patience and coolness shall carry the day, or I am much mistaken." Here an empty hansom came up ; Ogilvie hailed it, jumped in and rolled away to his rooms in Duke Street.

This momentary sprinkling on the glowing warmth of their friendship seemed to have only served to draw May and her guardian closer. Time sped on tranquilly and happily.

If Ogilvie came less frequently to Granby Road he managed to stay longer when he did come. He seemed to have more orders for private boxes than ever.

The Conroys were for two days in town, about the middle of December, two days which May passed almost completely with Frances and her mother, finding both as kind and interested in herself as ever, and Frances more sympathetic than May had ever known her before.

Mrs. Conroy, though anxious to get some warm, sunny, winter place, was not worse than usual, and both mother and daughter spoke cheerfully of returning in the spring and taking May back with them to the Chase.

Both deeply regretted that Ogilvie had been obliged to run down to Yorkshire for a couple of days just when they came to town.

It was a rush altogether that brief spell of intercourse, and May felt terribly lonely when she had bid them good-bye at Charing Cross and returned to the desolate rigidity of Miss Macallan's solidly-furnished dwelling.

But the day after Ogilvie appeared in the evening, and made himself delightfully agreeable both to May and to Miss Macallan, after which came a spell of peaceful monotony, which to May was anything but monotonous.

Meanwhile the Fates spun diligently the humble web of May's destiny, intertwining many side issues in its meshes.

* * * * *

Carr did not return directly to Paris. He found an Australian friend who persuaded him to run down to Torquay, and it was not till after a short stay there that Carr made his way across the Channel.

Madame Falk had had only one short letter from May since Carr's visit to her. In this she expressed her great pleasure at seeing him, and thanked her kind friend for her useful present of gloves.

Busy as she was Madame Falk had had no time to answer, or even to wonder at Carr's silence, though he had promised to write, and this particular afternoon on which the story returns to her, her pen was galloping at hot speed towards the end of a letter to be finished and despatched by five o'clock. Absorbed though she was, her attention was caught by voices in the vestibule.

"But Madame is occupied, Monsieur, I must not disturb her," she heard Adrienne say in firm accents.

"Miss Barton then?" returned a male voice.

"Is gone out, Monsieur."

"May I sit down and wait?"

"Yes, of course you can!" cried Madame Falk, bursting out upon the interlocutors. "My dear Mr. Carr, if you will wait twenty minutes in the *salon* without a fire, I shall be quite free. Here are cigarettes, and papers, and books. I am dying to talk to you, but I *must* get my letter off first—no, keep on your overcoat."

"And I am dying to talk to you! Yes! of course I will wait."

Madame Falk opened the door of the *salon*, thrust Carr into

it, and retired to her own den, almost before he had finished speaking.

Carr waited patiently ; he smoked two or three cigarettes, skimmed three or four papers, and had looked at the title-page of a yellow-covered novel, when Madame Falk's cheery, pleasant voice called to him from the inner room :

"You must be cold !—if you don't mind a scene of confusion, come in here."

Carr obeyed.

"I was well used to confusion once," he said, smiling as he drew a chair facing Madame Falk. "I hadn't the luck to be brought up with any women about me. I don't remember my mother, I fancy it is a great loss, makes a fellow rather rugged."

"You are not rugged," she returned, as she tied up and sealed her packet. "Here, Adrienne," to the *bonne*, who came in obedience to her hand-bell. "Take this to the post at once. Now, thank Heaven, I am free for the rest of the day, and can enjoy a good long gossip, if you will so far indulge me."

"You cannot enjoy it more than I shall ; I suppose you want to hear all about Miss Riddell ? First of all, here is a parcel for you," and he presented one done up in brown paper. "It has been in my portmanteau for more than a fortnight."

Madame Falk thanked him and laid it aside.

"I found the young lady looking remarkably well, in fact I did not think her pretty before ; nor is she exactly pretty, but there is something charming in her face, something uncommon, and by Jove ! what expressive eyes she has ! She was uncommonly pleased to see me. Oh ! I am not conceited," for Madame Falk smiled, "I don't suppose it was for my own sake, but to talk about you and Miss Barton, and a little woman I have seen here."

"I know—Mademoiselle Perret," put in Madame Falk.

"Then the lady she is living with came in, which was a great nuisance," continued Carr, "for we were getting on splendidly. Miss Riddell is less shy, less silent than she used to be, and I felt quite at home with her. This lady, a Miss Macallan, seems a formidable female ; she is head and shoulders over you, and has not an ounce of unnecessary flesh ; she has a sort of iron jaw and high cheek-bones—altogether a hard, obstinate-looking woman, with a voice to match. It seems she's a relation of

Ogilvie, and from the way she talked you could see that she considers him the biggest man living."

"I am afraid poor dear May cannot be happy or comfortable with such a woman!" exclaimed Madame Falk.

"She's not *unhappy*, I feel sure," returned Carr, with a far-away look in his eyes, as if he were conjuring up May's face before him.

"No, she is not unhappy, and I don't think that dour-looking employer of hers would venture to offend a *protégée* of Ogilvies—but she'd like to be living with you. The house she is in is dull and square and bare, though it is handsomely furnished, but the only pleasant-looking thing in it (after Miss Riddell herself) is a rosy-cheeked young servant. The old lady was fairly civil, and dying to know all about me."

"It must be most depressing to May to live in such a house," ejaculated Madame Falk. "I must persuade her to take a holiday and come over to us."

"Yes, do, Madame Falk!" he cried. "I wanted her to come back with me, but——"

"Of course she would not," she interrupted. "It would not do, here at least."

"Then I had another talk with her, I forgot your package the first time, so I went again. The old Gorgon was out, and I was shown up to the drawing-room. It is a trifle less ghastly than the *salle-à-manger*. Then there was a piano and a good fire, so we talked at a great pace—anyway I did—and she sang me a song without any fuss or trouble, and very sweetly she sang. It seems Ogilvie wishes her to learn, that she may teach hereafter if necessary."

"Very considerate of him," remarked Madame Falk.

"Perhaps," returned Carr in rather a discontented tone. "I don't know how it is, but I never liked Ogilvie; there is something inscrutable about him."

"Well, yes, a little—but I must say he has been so wonderfully kind about May, not at all what one could have expected."

"I had just gone over to the piano to ask for another song, when the door opened and Ogilvie came in, stopping for half a second, looking as black as thunder."

"Why?" asked Madame Falk, opening her eyes.

"Because he found me there!"

"Oh! impossible."

"I only know he gave me a flash of his eyes, that might have been followed by a spring at my throat from their expression—I only wish he'd have tried it!! Of course it was a mere lightning glimpse of hell!—then he was as cool and polite as ever, and made suitable conversation with great ease, but he hardly noticed Miss Riddell, and she did not seem quite at her ease. Then when I offered to call again for your little packet there, he said it would be sent to me, in a tone which forbade me to return. I am pretty sure he rules that nice young creature with a rod of iron."

"My dear Mr. Carr, you exaggerate! May is quite fond of him."

"She may be, but the little scene made a deucedly unpleasant impression on me, and things I have heard said have come back to my mind."

"What things?" interrupted Madame Falk. "Against Ogilvie?"

"No; not against any one in particular, but I wish you would ask May Riddell to come and stay with you, she would be better with you than with anyone else."

"I should greatly like to have her, and to treat her as a daughter, but, Mr. Carr, she would never consent to live on my bounty, and without any special training it would be long before she could find such remunerative employment here as she has in London, and it would not be wise to disoblige Mr. Ogilvie."

"You have all let Ogilvie get too tight a grip of you," cried Carr impatiently, then unconsciously taking a sheet of scribbled paper, he began to fold and unfold it with long, bony, brown hands. "There need be no difficulty about Miss Riddell coming to stay with you," he said nervously, and looking away from his interlocutor.

"More than you think," she returned. "I am quite sure May would not quit London without Mr. Ogilvie's full permission."

"What?" said Carr, throwing away his paper and gazing at Madame Falk with earnest, questioning eyes. "Do you think he has acquired such influence over her?"

"That is not exactly the way to put it. She certainly owes him some degree of deference to his wishes, considering all he has done for her. You seem very much impressed by your

meeting with Mr. Ogilvie—tell me what you fear? You have made me quite uncomfortable.”

“What I fear?” he repeated slowly, “I scarcely know. It is a sort of dim distrust—a kind of, perhaps unreasonable, conviction that this guardianship business will not end happily for May—I mean Miss Riddell——” he stopped.

“You are speaking out all you think you foresee,” said Madame Falk thoughtfully. “But I fancy I can understand you, and I do not think you are right. Ogilvie is a cool-headed man of the world—entirely taken up with ambition and business. It has chanced that, being accidentally present at Mr. Riddell’s death, he is struck and touched by the sad position of the desolate orphan—and the sensation of pity is new and interesting—so he befriends her; but he will be sent somewhere, or marry. May will find employment, perhaps near me, and the present tie between them will wear away, leaving only a kindly memory behind. But I am personally gratified by your friendly interest in my dear young friend.”

“Yes, she interests me!”

“I tell you what I will do,” resumed Madame Falk. “I will ask her to pay me a visit before Easter, fixing the date and making a point of it. She will come, I am sure, and I shall learn more from her own lips than from anything else.”

“I hope you may. Yes, *do* ask her. I shall be in Paris then, I think, and we’ll have some Coroberries!”

“Some what?” repeated Madame Falk.

“Coroberries—Australian for ‘high jinks.’”

“Thank you. And did you see Mr. Conroy and Frances?”

“No. They were away in the South of England. Audeley Chase is a delightful house—an ideal English country home. When shall we have anything like it in Australia?”

“Pray, remember how many centuries it took to create English homes.”

“True. Then we started half-way!”

“Yes, but you carried weight, in the shape of new and difficult conditions.”

“Yes, and we must develop on different lines.”

“Nothing can be secured without paying a price,” concluded Madame Falk, who had been “sorting” her papers while she spoke.

"I fear I have trespassed too long," said Carr, rising.

"By no means. I have been deeply interested in all you have said."

"And you will be sure to ask Miss Riddell over in February or March?"

"You may be sure I shall. I am a good deal more anxious to see her than you can be."

"Will you and Miss Barton do me the honour of dining with me at the Café Bignon any day that suits you?"

"Many thanks. We shall be very pleased."

"I will call to-morrow to learn what date you have fixed."

They shook hands, and Carr turned to leave the room. As he did so he was face to face with the two photographs which hung opposite Madame Falk's accustomed seat.

The light from a window which partially faced them showed them clearly, for it was still early afternoon on a bright, clear day. Carr stopped short, his eyes fixed on the portrait of the man.

"Who is that?" he asked abruptly. His voice showed that he was moved to forgetfulness of conventional etiquette.

"That," said Madame Falk, in a low tone, and pausing after the first word, "is the likeness of my late husband."

"Your husband!" cried Carr. "That cannot be! It is the portrait—it must be the portrait of my father, only younger-looking than I remember him twenty years ago!"

"For Heaven's sake!" said Madame Falk, in a distressed voice, "do not tear open old wounds! That is my poor husband as he was a year before I lost him."

"And to me it seems as certainly my father, whom I vividly remember, for I was his constant companion till I was ten years old, when he died. What does it all mean?"

"It is an accidental likeness. It can be nothing more," said Madame Falk. "My husband was lost at sea. He never reached land. There can be no connection between his portrait and the father you remember." She sat down as she spoke, and to her own surprise found herself trembling from head to foot.

(To be continued.)

Thoreau.

THOREAU was an American apart from other Americans. No wonder so many of his compatriots misunderstood him, called him misanthrope, and thought him fool into the bargain. The idea of a man devoting himself to the study and observation of Nature, unsubsidised by the State, could not fail to seem to many of them the most arrant waste of energy and good marketable youth. He had a profession of his own (that of surveyor), but instead of doling out his time to the neighbouring farmers and landowners, he preferred, once his livelihood was tolerably assured, to survey Nature as he pleased, watch the fishes in the Musketaquid River, the hawks sailing against the blue over their nests in the high trees, the squirrels cracking nuts or laying up their stores for the winter, the sunsets and the sunrises, Nature's general colour-changes, and her uniformity or lack of it in every particular.

He was wont, day after day, while resident in his little log hut of Walden, with the pines hugging it and the hills near it, to get up in time to see the sun rise. Alone he would ramble through the woods, marking how the birds greeted the coming declaration of a new day, noting which flowers had their petals tight closed and which bloomed for the dark hours and the daylight equally, and commenting in his note-books on the enthusiasms which these unconventional hours aroused in him.

It was nothing to him that he got soaked to the knee by the dew on the long grass. His theory was that the more a man gave himself up to Nature and Nature's ways the more impervious he became to the injuries that Nature is capable of inflicting. He wished to grow as hardy as the native Indian of his day, and also to acquire some of the instinctive knowledge of the world's surface which was the characteristic talent of the Redskins. In certain particulars, indeed, he was wiser than they, for he had had a college education, and this was likely to serve him well as a basis for the appreciation of his first-hand information culled from the

woods and lakes and rivers round about him. But he could not rival them in their matchless local instinct. Wandering with them in the woods he envied them inexpressibly their almost unconscious ability of determining which direction to take for a goal of which he soon completely lost sight. They taught him the trick indeed, but it was not easy even for him to use this knowledge. Who but a very child of Nature could rely upon the fact that certain plants always grow or hold their heads in a definite direction, are, so to speak, veracious compasses set up in the woods for the guidance of lost wayfarers?

They charged him with being a misanthrope, like Timon or Schopenhauer. But they wronged him. He proved this to the full when the split between North and South was at hand, and John Brown was arraigned and afterwards hung for his too energetic anti-slavery impulses. He, the recluse, the solitary, who felt more immediate affinity with squirrels and mice than with men, sent out a notice in Concord that he would address a meeting on the subject.

"I am here," he said, "to plead his (Brown's) cause with you. I plead not for his life, but his character—his immortal life, and so it becomes your cause wholly, and not his in the least I see now that it was necessary that the bravest and humanest man in the country should be hung. Perhaps he saw it himself. I *almost fear* that I may yet hear of his deliverance, doubting if a prolonged life—if any life—can do as much good as his death!"

And again, afterwards:

"For my own part, I commonly attend more to Nature than to man, but any affecting human event may blind our eyes to natural objects. I was so absorbed in him as to be surprised whenever I detected the routine of the natural world surviving still, or met persons going about their affairs indifferent. It appeared strange to me that the 'little dipper' should be still diving quietly in the river, as of yore, and it suggested that this bird might continue to dive here when Concord should be no more."

These are not the words, nor do they shadow the feelings of a misanthrope. In fact, however, Thoreau's life would have been insufferable to the accomplished hater of men. Such an one would in his solitude have been driven, if he observed Nature at all intently, to frame his theory of her as the Nature all-

devouring and merciless whom the pessimists declare her. The notion of living thus in exclusive communion with such a monster could only have come from the brain of a madman.

No; Thoreau was not a misanthrope like Schopenhauer; though, like Schopenhauer, he believed in the priceless value of uninterrupted leisure. It was to enjoy his leisure and the Nature whom he worshipped (it almost amounted to this), that he departed into the woods, and with his own hands built the little hut that was his home for a couple of years.

He admired Cowley's simple retired life. "Who would not, like you," he exclaims, "*cacher sa vie*?" delivered from the gilded impertinences of life."

Emerson tells us how impatiently he would listen to the tittle-tattle of common talk, concerned with, say, the adventures and misadventures of the Van Plunks on the Joneses on tour in Europe, or other such (to him) profitless subjects. And yet this brusque and pre-occupied man would start off with an appetite as the leader of a party of lads in quest of nuts or huckleberries. If Thoreau could not show the youngsters where these delicacies were, it was safe to say the season had fallen short of them.

"When I would go a-visiting," (he tells us on June 11th, 1855), "I find that I go off the fashionable street (not being inclined to change my dress) to where man meets man, and not polished shoe meets shoe."

Here speaks the disciple of Carlyle. Thoreau was, in fact, Carlylean to the core in morals and manners; though his enthusiasm about the lesser beings of Nature seems to set him on a lower level than the author of "Sartor Resartus." We say "seems" advisedly. For, in fact, one of his most interesting eccentricities is that oft-repeated fancy of his that brute creatures (as we call them) are "undeveloped men."

"If we take the age into account," he says, "may there not be a civilization going on among brutes as well as men? They seem to me to be rudimental, burrowing men, still standing on their defence, awaiting their transformation."

Again :

"I regard the horse as a human being in a humble state of existence."

So also of the domestic ox he has much to say in pity. The

restraint upon the poor brute's individuality seems to vex him as if he himself were shackled with gyves.

"I am singularly affected when I look over a herd of reclining oxen in their pasture, and find that every one has these brazen balls on his horns. They are partly humanised so. It is not pure brute. There is art added The bull has a ring in his nose."

There is a touch of dry humour here, the more acceptable because its source lies close to the righteous indignation that possesses him in the thought of the wrongs suffered unprotestingly by these beasts of the field. The brass-tipped horns and ringed nose are to Thoreau links in the chain of the promotion of the quadruped. By and bye they will rise to trousers, and behold—the metamorphosis will be complete !

With such views of the animal world and such sympathy of heart, no wonder the wild creatures among whom Thoreau lived at Walden soon came to regard him almost as one of themselves. They did not think it worth while to discontinue the various functions or diversions of their life merely because Thoreau was at hand watching them. Nay, more ; they accepted him as a rather big, but thoroughly congenial, comrade. The birds would perch upon his shoulders, and the fish floated contentedly into his hands and allowed him to take them from the river to be tenderly examined for a moment or two.

Hardly anywhere will you read aught more interesting in its way than Thoreau's account of the little snapping-turtle laying its eggs under his very nose. It did not appear to have the least fear of him, but dropped the eggs one after the other into the hole it had prepared, and then tightly closed the mouth of the cavity, and trod the sand evenly so that the woodchuck and other egg-devouring explorers might not see any mark to lead them to burrow for the imperfect young turtles. The little creature had no anxiety about Thoreau. He was not a woodchuck or a rat, but just Thoreau, whom all living creatures round Walden knew as a friend, not a foe.

There was also a squirrel which he once took into his hut, and which would not afterwards rejoin its blood-relations. Thoreau carried it back to the paternal tree, where its nuts were stored, and bade it enjoy itself. No ; it preferred Thoreau, and scampered after him into the house again. Such a tribute of

regard was more to Thoreau than if the two chief sovereigns of the world had agreed to dignify him with jewelled badges.

He tells us further of a mouse that had its nest under the boards of his house :

"It probably had never seen a man before ; and it soon became quite familiar, and would run over my shoes and up my clothes. It could readily ascend the sides of the room by short impulses, like a squirrel, which it resembled in its motions. At length, as I leaned with my elbow on the bench one day, it ran up my clothes, and along my sleeve, and round and round the paper which held my dinner, while I kept the latter close, and dodged and played at bo-peep with it ; and when at last I held still a piece of cheese between my thumb and finger, it came and nibbled it, sitting in my hand, and afterwards cleaned its face and paws like a fly, and walked away."

On the 7th June, 1853, he thus refers to another of his friends :

"Visited my night-hawk on her nest. Could hardly believe my eyes when I stood within seven feet and beheld her sitting on her eggs, her head towards me ; she looked so Saturnian, so one with the earth, so sphynx-like, a relic of the reign of Saturn, which Jupiter did not destroy, a riddle that might well cause a man to go and dash his head against a stone."

His sympathy with and appreciation of the simpler but not less marvellous effects of Nature must be noticed. He is never weary of admiring lilies—emblems of purity bred in the mud. They are to him the very crown of Mother Earth's production. He gathers them and nurses them at home as he would have nursed a nest of motherless young birds if he felt any hope of being able to rear them.

So, too, a sunrise or a sunset, or the mysterious beauty of a moonlit night, holds him by the heart irresistibly.

"June 13th 1851. Walked to Walden last night (moon not quite full). I noticed night before last from Fair Haven how variable was some water by moonlight, like the river and Fair Haven, though far away, reflecting the light with a faint glimmering sheen, as in the spring of the year. The water shines with an inward light, like a heaven on earth. The silent depth and serenity and majesty of water ! Strange that men should distinguish gold and diamonds, when these precious elements are so common ! I saw a distant river by moonlight,

making no noise, yet flowing, as by day, still to the sea, like melted silver, reflecting the moonlight. Far away it lay, encircling the earth. How far away it may look in the night ! Even from a low hill, miles away down in the valley ! As far off as Paradise and the delectable country ! There is a certain glory attends on water by night ! ”

Others besides Thoreau are sensitive in these directions, but few to the extent that he was. It was due to his peculiar endowments and the exceptional manner in which he fostered them. Some of the rhapsodies in which he confesses his happiness in this close communion with Nature are quite pantheistical. In fact, he and Wordsworth were kindred in soul, and arrived at much the same estimate of the world by somewhat dissimilar roads.

Some of his moral and various memoranda are worth perpetuating. Not so much because of their profundity as for the light they throw upon his inner character—the only part of him about which he felt concerned.

This, for example :

“Woe to him who wants a companion, for he is unfit to be the companion even of himself. We inspire friendship in men when we have contracted friendship with the gods.”

This is only another way of expressing that old Latin dictum which found such favour with St. Vincent de Paul, Cardinal Newman, and many another man of large and magnanimous personality :

“Never less alone than when alone.”

He had such a respect for his soul, that he resented the intrusion of common thoughts as he would have objected to the protracted visit of a common bore in his Walden hut.

“Shall the tangle of our thoughts,” he asks, “be a public arena where the most trivial affair of the market, and the gossip of the tea-table is discussed, a dusty, noisy, trivial place ! or shall it be a quarter of the heavens itself, consecrated to the gods ? . . . Think of admitting the details of a single case of the criminal court into the mind, to stalk profanely through its very sanctum sanctorum for an hour, aye, for many hours ; to make a very bar-room of your mind’s inmost apartment, as if, for a moment, the dust of the street had occupied you—aye, the very street itself, with all its travel, had poured through your very mind of

minds, your thought's shrine, with all its filth and bustle. Would it not be an intellectual suicide? By all manner of boards and traps, threatening the extreme penalty of the divine law, excluding trespassers from these grounds, it behoves us to preserve the purity and sanctity of the mind."

Such words as these alone would have sufficed to indicate Thoreau as an anomaly among men. Who of us dare hope to live up to the ennobling standard of mental culture or self-preservation which he did not scruple to strive towards?

Of a like nature was his strongly-expressed dis-sympathy with men who give up themselves to the acquisition of wealth, journey in short through existence without halting by the way to examine into the beauties of the land they are traversing. He had as mean an opinion of the whole-hearted tradesman and merchant as the Chinese literati profess; ranked them, again like the cultivated Chinaman, far below the average field labourer, who may be supposed to learn something about Nature and to gain some love for her by the mere fact of his methodical intercourse with her.

Here is another of his half quaint and thoroughly respectable remarks, the truth of which more than one of us can corroborate:

"Only thought which is expressed by the mind in repose, or, as it were, lying on its back and contemplating the heavens, is adequately and fully expressed. What are sidelong, transient, passing half views? The writer expressing his thoughts must be as well seated as the astronomer contemplating the heavens. He must not occupy a constrained position."

He had no very great faith in being able to arrest by aphorisms the headstrong mercantile spirit among his fellow countrymen. But it does not distress him either to acknowledge his impotence in this matter. That were inconsistent both with his disposition and the aphorisms themselves.

"He will get to the goal first who stands stillest."

"Stand outside the wall, and no harm can reach you; the danger is that you be walled in with it."

"By sufferance you may escape suffering."

"He who resists not at all will never surrender."

There is just enough paradox in these sayings to give them piquancy. But we can imagine how they would affect the conventional Yankee of his day, by marking the scorn with

which they are received by the conventional Yankee of our day. It was as if he recommended men to live the life of a tree or a flower. Leibnitz and his opponents, who made so much of the question of free will and its opposite, might have saved themselves a deal of trouble by accepting Thoreau's view of human life and its responsibilities. Indeed, he saw an analogy between men and women and flowers, even as he regarded the brute beasts as inchoate human beings. "Each human being has his flower, which expresses his character." Happy those of us who may be compared to the perfumed and beautiful lily growing from the mud, rather than to the stinking carrion-flower or the nightshade.

He took delight in all natural exercises. Walking and bathing were his chief resources in the scorching summers of Concord. In his diaries we see him spending the hottest hours of the July days, stripped and paddling up the streams, now sinking to the breast, and now resting under a bridge for shade and the cool breeze that (he tells us) appertains to the under side of bridges, and always interested in the vegetation of the river banks and the fish that his trained eye observes. In this curious position under a bridge, he was wont to hear quite as much of the world's gossip as he cared to hear. The old ladies of Concord and the neighbourhood, mopping their faces in the blistering heat, might well have envied him his cooler retreat, though they would doubtless have been scandalised to have discovered him. His description of the caressing sensations of the wind upon his skin are as minute and characteristic as everything else upon which this singular man concentrated his attention.

As a youth he was a good shot. Later, however, he was averse to taking life of any kind. In one of his writings, he mentions the chickens in a farm house which "stalked about the room like members of the family, too humanized, methought, to roast well." This was his feeling towards all living things. Gilbert White's allusion to a landrail as eating like a woodcock would have seemed almost sacrilegious to him. He carries the same mind with him when he looks at the very trees of his forest.

"No tree," he tells us, "has so fair a bole, and so handsome an instep, as the beech."

Men thought him an incongruity to the very last. It was only after his death that he was reckoned a genius, though of the minor order. Perhaps it was to be expected that he should not live to become an old man, yet if ever a man might claim to lead a natural life, at least for a time, it was he. "My greatest skill," he said when his death was near, "has been to want but little. For joy I could embrace the earth. I shall delight to be buried in it. And then I think of those among men who will know that I love them, though I tell them not."

These words epitomise Thoreau better than the most laboured category of his qualities and defects. He loved man, but he loved Nature much more than man.

It is remarkable that in his last illness (he was forty-four and Nature had given him bronchitis for prowling about in the November snow, counting the rings on trees), he would not play the part of invalid as other men would have done. "As long as he could possibly sit up, he insisted on his chair at the family table" (he was not then at Walden), and said, "It would not be social to take my meals alone."

This from the man who has been reproached for his misanthropic love of solitude!

The Mouse-Tower on the Tyne.

CHAPTER I.

Do you know the bend of the Tyne just above Kielder? If you do, then you will also know that the waters part just opposite the school-house, and that a tiny islet rears its head, flanked by a bold out-work of boulders, amidst the tumbling, tossing stream.

It is a broad river here, grown daring by the in-pouring of other floods and burns—a very different stream to what it is at its source, at the foot of the mighty Dead-water fell. For now it has grown tumultuous and boisterous, and dashes on its way with a recklessness which is wonderful to behold.

Once upon a time four little town-bred children came out to these remote wilds, and took up their residence in a tiny cottage. They came to grow fat and rosy in the pure fresh air; because the breezes that blow right off the Dead-water are fed by heather-scents, and perfumed by pine-breaths, until they become life-giving and life-blessing in their turn.

And because these little town children had never seen an islet before, they straightway fell upon it, laid siege to it, carried it in triumph by virtue of bare feet and tucked-up clothing; and finally, having stormed the banks, made a tower of stones, and reeds, and rushes, and ensconced themselves within, crawling in thither on their hands and knees, after the fashion of those warrior-chieftains of whom their elder brother, Bob, read to them out of the wonderful book of adventures brought by Aunt Marjorie when she came back from London in the spring.

Bob was the leader of the valorous band, and he was only ten; the others went down by steps until they stopped short at Baby Max, who had reached the mature and discriminating age of four, but who possessed the heart and vigour of twelve. He had been carried over pick-a-back by Bob, but that did not matter. No one ever challenged Max's claims to be a hero.

Marion, who was eight, and Blue-boy, who was six, fitted in between, and held their own very comfortably with the rest.

Blue-boy's real name was Cecil, but no one paid any attention to that.

They were all up here under Aunt Marjorie's care ; but there—shall I be telling tales out of school if I tell you at once that Aunt Marjorie was only nineteen herself, and that she and they were all together under the rule and thumb of Dennis, their mother's old and trusty servant ?

Bob, Marion, Blue-boy, and Max built a tower ; and then they sat down in it, and by it, and waited to see what was going to happen. Nothing ever *does* happen when you sit and wait for it ; and so, because Aunt Marjorie was very tender to these intrepid young warriors, she proposed that they should make a fire, and boil a kettle, and make themselves comfortable, while they awaited the on-coming of the expected opposing forces, although neither she nor they knew in the faintest degree who these opposing forces would turn out to be.

The smoke of the fire went curling softly through the pines to the upper air, and the intrepid warriors burnt their fingers and blackened their faces, and were supremely happy, smoke-dried and grimy as they were. They ate thick bread and butter with a relish, because of the novelty of their surroundings ; and they drank their smoky tea, and finished off the repast with a heap of wild strawberries, which were far superior to the tame bought ones upon which they had luxuriated at home in the town.

None of the strawberries were bigger than peas ; very few of them reached those mighty dimensions—but what of that ? They were sweeter, and fresher, and more delicious than any others, and their taste would linger in the memory when that of all other fruits, probably, had died away for ever.

Such are the happy—thrice happy—illusions of childhood !

Aunt Marjorie poured out the tea. Dennis sat cutting bread and butter, and wondering at the capacity of the children ; while Marion openly grumbled at the amount of sugar Blue-boy managed to devour with his strawberries.

"It is positively sinful, Denny," she cried, appealing to the old woman as she spoke, with the vehement assertiveness of eight.

At eight years of age, you see, one knows the world thoroughly, and one judges strongly !

Dennis, who had had great experience, calmly smiled.

"They are boys, Miss Marion," she said quietly. "And boys

eat more than girls, bless you ! They've a deal to fill out before they go back to Town."

But Marion was disgusted. She shook out her red-gold locks until they floated in the wind.

"Anyone, to hear *you*, Denny, would think it was a virtue to devour a great quantity of stuff !" and with her tip-tilted nose high in the air, Miss Marion swung herself away, and sank face downwards on the grass, to read something more about the warrior-chiefs and the be-feathered heroes.

The boys, their appetites at last appeased, bedecked themselves with leaves and flowers ; and sat down before Aunt Marjorie, after calmly dispossessing Marion of the book she was reading.

One poked his knees into the ground, and lay flat, with his head on his hands. Another reclined on his back ; a third—and this was Max—cuddled up to Aunt Marjorie, for in his secret soul, he was just a wee, *wee* bit afraid of the lawless proceedings of those same mighty hunters, and his blood was apt to run cold when much scalping had to be done !

Now the smoke of that fire rose high above the trees, and floated in the air, until it attracted the attention of a man some distance off, who was slowly sauntering through the woods with his gun upon his shoulder. He was a man of some observation, and he stood still to wonder.

"Poachers, I'll be bound !" he exclaimed, for he was the lord of the manor, and poachers were the things he feared the most in these wilds.

"I'll have a look," he next decided ; "and if I am right, I'll send Benson to trap them to-night."

So he marched boldly through the heather, and between the pines to the water's edge, trampling down many a noble fern, and many a dainty bit of moss in his fiery haste as he went on. And the river, which had nearly proved an obstacle to the children, was no source of dread to *him*.

He sprang from stone to stone, and landed at last on the islet, where the ringing sound of Marion's voice, as she argued the matter of Blue-boy's appetite with Dennis, quickly undeceived him as to the character of the poachers he had come to trace.

Then, because he was a very wily young man, and not at all bad-hearted, he sat down out of sight, in a little hollow scooped

out of the silver sand of the shore, and patiently settled to bide his time.

He had a purpose in waiting. He meant to have some fun on his own account with these young trespassers. So he sat down, and as luck would have it, the drowsy murmur of the waters, the hum of the insects, the chirp of the birds, all filling the air, overcame his senses, and yielding to the monotone of Nature's voices, he put his gun down gently, closed his eyes, and in less than five minutes was fast asleep.

CHAPTER II.

AUNT MARJORIE read till she was tired, and Dennis, who knew every tone of her dear young lady's voice, called out briskly :

"Run away honeys, your Auntie's read enough. Go and play, and maybe ye'll find some bold enemy just now."

For the artful old woman knew exactly how to deal with her young charges ; and when they had scampered away, with feet thrust hastily into shoes, *minus* stockings, she turned to Aunt Marjorie and begged her to put down the book and take some rest.

"You are always *tueing* and moiling on with these bairns, Miss Marjorie," she said, "as if it were yer life-work."

"What else have I to do, Denny?" asked the girl with a hopeless ring in her voice. "Indeed, I am very grateful to the children ; if I had not them," she added softly to herself, "I should go mad."

And the old woman heard her, and her eyes filled with tears, because she had once been young herself, and understood.

"Were you a bit hasty, honey?" she asked very gently, for as she had been more than thirty-five years with this family, having never served any other, she knew all their affairs. "Were you a bit hasty, honey?"

But Marjorie shook her head.

"I think not, Denny," she replied. "You see, Miss Middleton told me so plainly what had happened that I could not very well do differently."

Dennis was unconvinced.

"I don't like Miss Middleton," she asserted stoutly. "I've watched her above a bit, and I find she's sly and deceitful."

Depend upon it, honey, she's had a game of her own to play, and you'll be very sorry in time to come, if you find you've just been helping her to play it. Can nothing be done, Miss Marjorie?"

But the girl shook her head.

"I was yer mother's maid before I went from her death-bed to Miss Nellie's house, when she married Colonel Forbes, and I've served ye all well and truly, though I say it who shouldn't. And it goes to my heart to see you pinin' and frettin' day by day. What's the use of contradictin'? I know it, and ye know it, too!"

"What am I to do, then? He has gone abroad, Dennis. He went to Africa with young Scott-Forbes, the Colonel's cousin, you know. They will not return for some time, I am told."

Then came a long silence. And then she added slowly and sadly: "And when he returns he is to marry Miss Middleton."

"Hoot, toot!" cried the old woman angrily. "She says so, I reckon, but who believes *her*, I'd like to know? I don't, for one."

And if Marjorie had spoken the truth her heart would have answered, "And I don't, for another!"

But she contented herself with shaking her head, and smiling sorrowfully.

"No young lady would tell a falsehood, Denny," she said, after a moment's pause. "Young *ladies* don't do such things."

"No true *women* do, as I know of," replied the old servant gravely. "But she's not one of that sort. No, no, Miss Marjorie. She's not like the ladies I've had to deal with in *my* day."

Marjorie leaned back against the moss-grown trunk of a spreading beech tree and closed her eyes.

"It's been a bad business," said the old servant, shaking her head as she sat down near her young mistress. "But who's to mend matters now, with *him* so far away, and *her* up here? No, things must e'en take their way; they cannot be helped. Young folks have to learn by experience, folks tell you; but ch, dear heart, yon's a *dour* teacher, as they say in these parts."

Then the influences of the spot overcame her, too; and her eyes closed; and she nodded and slept, in spite of her deep anxiety on behalf of her young lady and her affairs.

Marjorie alone sat wakefully leaning against her tree, unable to close her eyes or to slumber.

Dennis had set her thinking, and this was a bad thing to have done, for it made her feel very uncomfortable.

"Depend upon it there are faults on both sides," candid friends had said, on talking over a certain event not long before.

Marjorie Langton's engagement to Lisle Bartram had been the sensation of the hour of last season, and everybody had talked of it.

It took the world by surprise when this quiet, girlish, north-country maiden came up to Town and straightway made a conquest of the big, handsome, young fellow who had been the hope of many a heart for so long ; but who had, nevertheless, refused to be subdued by the charms of anyone heretofore.

"Who, on earth, *is* Marjorie Langton?" had been buzzed about pretty freely, for everyone knew who Lisle Bartram was—what were his prospects, and what his marketable valuation.

But—"Marjorie Langton!" A mere nobody. It was too shocking.

To be sure, she was one of the Langtons, of Ellieshaw ; but then, bless you, that meant nothing, for old Langton of Ellieshaw was poor enough in all conscience when he departed this life, and but for the fact that this girl's sister had married Colonel Forbes, no one would ever have heard of the Langtons, or of Ellieshaw, or of Marjorie herself. Colonel Forbes *was* a somebody, and a big somebody into the bargain. Not to know Colonel Forbes was to be very low down in social importance. He won his V.C. in the East, for some especial act of daring. He was handsome, intrepid, and oblivious of Society—therefore, Society courted *him*. Oh, it is fine to *be* courted ! It made Colonel Forbes' life a burden to him, for he was a man of camps, not of cities ; and he cared no more for fashions than he did for balls and *fêtes*.

All the same, even *he* was pleased when Marjorie, his wife's little sister Marjorie, came up to Town and landed Lisle Bartram at the first go-off. Never a man better pleased than the Colonel, for Lisle Bartram was after his own heart, and everything had gone on swimmingly until that ill-fated day when the "little rift" came between them, and Lisle wrote to say he couldn't dine with Ellinor Forbes, for he and Scott had

made it up to go shooting big game in Africa, and he was busy collecting his traps together.

The Colonel stared at the letter which his wife had put into his hand, for he could make neither "head nor tail" of it.

"Shoot big game in Africa," he read out aloud. "Why he talks as if Africa were next door! And what does he mean by going there at all? Marjorie!" A new light flashed him. "Marjorie! I hope you and he—— I say!"

He broke off abruptly, for Marjorie had simply dropped from her chair in a dead faint, and the Colonel's sentence was never finished.

Then, when he came to understand it in some measure, he packed Miss Marjorie off with the children and Dennis to a friend's cottage, on the banks of the dear North Tyne, beneath the shadow of the hills, and told them to run wild, and to make themselves happy, by growing fat and rosy, and forgetting such a place as London had ever existed.

And this the children were not at all slow in doing.

Colonel Forbes never quite understood that affair.

There was a good deal of Miss Middleton in it; but the Colonel, like Dennis, did not care too much for this young lady. He did not believe in her.

Perhaps he thought, too, that, like another prodigal, Marjorie might come to her senses out in the wilds, and be induced to return and repent, and find her home at last.

There were a good many thoughts of this kind in his mind, no doubt; but, like a very wise man, he kept them safely to himself, and said nothing to anyone, least of all to Marjorie.

He only patted her hand when he said "Good-bye" at the station, and whispered: "Keep your heart up, child," but, somehow, he comforted her immensely. That was a favourite sentence of the Colonel's—"Keep your heart up."

He had said it on far distant battlefields to his "boys;" beneath the star-lit heavens, when the enemy lay low; in hospitals, where sick and wounded tossed in pain. And many a "forlorn hope" had been changed by that one clear-ringing cry of the "Kornel's," "Keep your heart up, boys!"—awakening at once the ready answer from the brave souls under his command, kindled into touch with him on the instant—"Aye, aye, sir; we will!"

So, to Marjorie, he just whispered the words, and she smiled back.

"Dear, big, old fellow!" she murmured, as she sat back against the cushions, and the train speeded away. "If all the world were like *him*, how happy everyone would be!"

But the Colonel, as he went home, kept saying to himself: "It takes *two* to make a quarrel, so they have both been a good bit to blame; and as for Miss Middleton—poof!"

Which was *his* way of saying that he did not believe that little tale at all, whoever set it going.

"I daresay *she* started it herself," said the astute man of war. "I should just say she did; but oh! what fools some people are!"

But whether he meant Miss Middleton, or his dear friend, Lisle Bartram, or his dearer little sister-in-law, was never to be known by any mortal ear.

Thus it had come to pass that Marjorie Langton and her niece and nephews were "doing" warrior chieftains on the desert island in the tower on the Tyne; and it was Dennis who had given it its name, for she had said as soon as she saw it, "Oh, you ridiculous creatures, it's a little mouse-tower; and you're all a set of mice."

At which the children clapped their hands, and Blue-boy, tearing out a leaf from Aunt Marjorie's sketch-book, had chalked up in large, bold, copy-book letters: "The Mouse-Tower on the Tyne!" So proud were they of the name Dennis had bestowed upon their house of stones and rubble.

CHAPTER III.

AND so it came to pass, while Dennis slept and Marjorie lost herself in dreams, that the enemy was actually near at hand, with out-posts deserted, pickets off duty, in careless insecurity, given up to ease, and indolence, and apathy. What a chance for the children!

It was Blue-boy who stalked him first of all.

He, peeping through the bushes, espied the foe in ambush, fast asleep upon the ground. A great big foe, too, with fair hair, a rough shooting suit, and—most glorious—now what was to be done?

Max, whose terror in life was a gun, promptly suggested, with a shudder, that they should shoot him.

He often did violence in this way to his feelings, for fear the others should only think of him as a baby, when he wanted to be considered grown-up.

Bob and Blue-boy thought this was not "good enough."

"What was the use of a prisoner," said they, "when you ended his career so quickly?"

Most realistic of all—a *gun* upon the turf at his head!

Here was something for which they had never dared to hope. The boy was sagacious.

Creeping away as silently as if he were indeed a scout in actual warfare, the soldier-spirit dominant in his little heart, he stole back to the others. With his finger on his lip, and by dint of many cautions and warnings, he induced them to follow him stealthily to the attack. Constituting himself as leader by virtue of the discovery he had made, with the aid of four grimy pocket-handkerchiefs, they bound the hands and feet of their victim, without venturing near his face, over which he had placed his soft grey cap.

And then the four, sitting down near him, held a council of war.

Here was their prisoner, captured when about to attack their fortress.

They had secured his person. There was another question which appealed to them more strongly.

"He looks well-dressed," they remarked. "Let his friends *ransom* him, then"—oh, blissful thought!—"then we shall never be short of pocket-money any more; and we'll buy this island," said Bob.

"And we'll build a real tower," added Blue-boy.

"And I shall be the queen," put in Marion, and this was the climax.

After this, if the legs and arms of the victim twitched suspiciously, who noticed it?

Then there came "the deluge."

Bob wanted to be king, he spoke of "lawful rights."

Blue-boy wanted to be king—he had discovered the enemy.

Max wanted to be king, because—being the youngest—he always had a Benjamin's portion.

But Marion—Maid Marion—put in *her* claim because of her unique position, and her cry was an echo of her father's, "*Place aux dames !*"

What was to be done? Who was to decide?

Happy thought!

There was Aunt Marjorie. "Go and bring her, *she* shall decide, and *her* decision shall be final!"

So said they all, and no sooner said than done.

Off flew Blue-boy's bare legs, disappearing through the undergrowth of ferns without any regard to the prickles of the brambles or the clinging of wild raspberry vines.

And back through the same brushwood he came, dragging Aunt Marjorie to look at the prisoner, and decide upon the very important matter which was disturbing the peace of the island. The man had never moved. He lay on his back, his arms crossed and tied, his feet bound also in the same fashion. His guard watched him carefully on three sides, while Blue-boy and the arbiter of his fate stood at his head and looked down upon him.

"He is a *gentleman*!" cried Aunt Marjorie in some alarm, for she had been expecting to see some village boy tied up in captivity. But the warriors smiled all the more cheerfully.

"So he is!" they assented valorously, and they swelled with pride as they said the words.

"And we shall get a big ransom, shan't we, Aunt Marjorie? We're going to *buy* this island."

"And build a tower——"

"A *real* one," they went on, interrupting one another as fast as possible, and then Marion capped it all again, by saying, "And I'm going to be the queen!"

Which took every one's breath away, and left the three boys looking up at Aunt Marjorie's face in mute expectancy of her verdict.

They had all taken their eyes off their prisoner, so no one noticed that he had shaken his cap from his face, and was looking also straight up at Aunt Marjorie's face.

And she, her eyes going from one child to the other, wondered in her own mind, what sort of a man this would turn out to be, and *how* he would take their little joke!

"Look here, dears," she said gently, and how every tone of

her voice thrilled through the prisoner's soul! "When brave men fight they are very merciful to their enemies, they sometimes let them go."

There was a howl of dismay from the quartette and Marjorie held up her finger.

"Hush! you'll wake him. Gracious, what a sound sleeper he must be! Let us be merciful, too. Let us give him his liberty!"

She stooped and began undoing the knots as fast as she could; but just then a very funny thing happened, the tables were turned, for, lo! the prisoner sprang up vigorously, and he caught Aunt Marjorie by the arm, and he shouted—such an enormously great shout that the scared children rushed in wild alarm from the spot, thinking no one knew *what* was going to happen, as he said:

"You are *my* prisoner, madam, and I shall never, never, never let *you* go again, Marjorie!" His voice dropped suddenly. "My Marjorie," he whispered tenderly in her ear, and what *else* he said and did, no one ever knew, for only a few curlews whirling overhead, and a stately old heron fishing lower down, saw, or heard anything further.

When Blue-boy and Bob came to their senses, they flew to Dennis, and waking her very sharply, begged her to go and help Aunt Marjorie; which the old servant, in considerable alarm, proceeded to do most willingly, although she grumbled on the way.

"I never *did* hold with coming here, dears," she said. "I told the Colonel it would be a risk."

"Oh, hurry, hurry!" they cried. "Never mind all that. Let us save Aunt Marjorie. He will carry her away. That's what they always did up here."

But when they reached the bushes, and Dennis reconnoitred, she drew the children back.

"Eh, dears!" said she, "the Lord be praised! Come away, and I'll go to the cottage and make a nice cake for tea."

This was a new way of entertaining prisoners, and the children began to feel afraid something had happened to "dear Denny."

"We waked her too suddint, didn't we, dear?" said Max, stroking her withered cheek, as she stooped over him.

"It's Mr. Lisle Bartram, my honeys," she said joyfully. "It's

his own self come back from the lions' dens, and we must be joyful on his account, and Miss Marjorie's ; though how in the world he's managed to get up here, is more than I can tell."

"It's soon told though, Dennis," said Bartram, who had come up unperceived, with Aunt Marjorie. "I never went with Scott-Forbes after all ; for just as I was going, my relative, old Mr. Bartram, died, and left me all his estates, of which this *island*, as you are pleased to call it, Blue-boy, is a very tiny part. I declare I thought you were all poachers," he said, with a burst of laughter,

"*We* thought you were an enemy," cried they, with one accord ; and then they fell upon *him* and upon Aunt Marjorie, and there was such a din, and such laughter, and such fun, that they never quieted down until Dennis called to them across the river that it was time for tea, and that the cakes were hot.

It was Lisle who sprang from rock to rock with the children, it was Lisle who helped Aunt Marjorie ashore—and if he stopped rather long upon the bank, and held her a little tiny bit tightly in his arms, who was there to mind ? for is she not going to be his own dear wife after all ?

Colonel Forbes always laughs. I believe he knew all the time that Lisle had *not* gone out to shoot those lions.

I know he has many jokes about the Mouse-tower on the Tyne, and I know whenever he jokes, Aunt Marjorie gets red and runs away.

"Upon my word, Nellie !" says the Colonel to his wife, "I am the best match-maker that ever lived."

"Don't be so conceited !" she rejoins. "You had nothing on earth to do with it. It was all patched up over the ruins of that tower of the children. *They* had *their* fingers in the pie, if you like ! And oh, my dear, a puff of smoke was the first signal of capitulation."

MARY S. HANCOCK.

Too Late!

WATERLOO was over. The campaign was ended, and the gallant Royal Irish Dragoons ("The Leinster Lads")—or rather what was left of them—had returned to Dublin. Their ranks were sadly thinned, but the survivors were covered with honour and glory. All the world rang with the dashing charge they had made at that critical moment when the issue of the great battle seemed to hang quivering in the balance, and their entry into the Irish metropolis partook more of the nature of a triumphal procession than a cavalry march.

The regiment had been quartered at the Royal Barracks just six months—six months fraught with delicious memories for the gay, reckless Captain Mornish, notwithstanding the critical condition of his financial affairs, which were terribly involved, for during that period he had surrendered himself a willing prisoner to the charms of Miss Kathleen Cleary, the fairest of all Erin's fair daughters, and an heiress to boot, and the wedding-day had been already fixed—when the melancholy events transpired which we wish to relate.

About ten o'clock on the morning of Tuesday, January 23rd, 1816, the Holyhead packet, *Nora Creina*, crossed the bar at the entrance to Dublin Harbour on the flood tide, and made her way leisurely up the channel to the quay. Amongst those passengers who disembarked might have been noticed an elderly man of the shabby-genteel order, dressed in a suit of rusty black, which bore evidence by its threadbare appearance to the impecuniosity of its wearer.

Looking round for a moment, like one who after many years recognises the old familiar landmarks, the traveller took a small valise, his only luggage, in his hand, and, fighting his way clear of a clamorous crowd of car-drivers all anxious for a fare, he trudged through the newly-fallen snow along the riverside in the direction of the Carlisle Bridge. Pausing for a second or two to gaze up Sackville Street, he turned into an eating-house near the bridge, from which he emerged an hour later, refreshed in body and less travel-stained in appearance.

Threading his way in and out among the pedestrians he pursued his way along Bachelor's Walk—or, at any rate, what is now Bachelor's Walk, for we are not quite sure whether or no it was known by that name when the century was young, and our authority for the story omits to mention the thoroughfare by name—sighing to himself as he thought of his last visit to the Irish capital, five-and-twenty years before. *Then* he was a gentleman of leisure bound upon pleasure, *now* he was process-server, bailiff, and general drudge to a London attorney, and his errand was a far from congenial one, for to him had been entrusted the office of serving a writ upon Captain Mornish of the Royal Irish Dragoons.

Whilst he had been refreshing himself at the eating-house thick clouds had gathered and a heavy drizzle had come on, through which the buildings on the south side of the river loomed blurred and indistinct, as though seen through a telescope with the focus inaccurately adjusted. Soon this drizzle gave way to a pelting, pitiless rain, and, wet to the skin, the old man plodded along through the snow and the slush on his thankless mission. Keeping to the north side of the river he passed along the quay, past the Four Courts, until he came to the "Bloody Bridge." Here he turned off to the right, up a short street near the Royal Barracks, and at once found himself among a crowd of eager but silent sight-seers.

That at once imposing and pathetic spectacle, a military funeral procession, was passing along the street. First came the firing party with reversed arms. Then the band, with the plumes on the helmets drooping lank and mournful in the merciless rain like the bedraggled tail-feathers of some dejected, drenched rooster, playing a slow and dispiriting funereal march. The monotonous *bam-bam* of the big drum smote upon the ear like the heavy thud of spadeful after spadeful of sodden clay thrown down upon some loved one's coffin, and the continuous *whir-r-r-r* of the muffled side-drums, as it mingled with the sad, weird strains, recalled to the imagination the rush of the autumn wind sweeping the dead leaves from the swaying branches, or the rustling of the wings of the grim Angel of Death as he bears the soul of the departed away, beyond that bourne from which no traveller returns, into the great unknown realms of eternity.

Following the band came a gun-carriage drawn by six powerful horses, upon which rested the remains of the deceased officer who was being borne to his last resting-place. Upon the wet folds of the silken flag that covered the coffin, clinging to it so closely that nearly every line of the panelled oaken casket was visible, lay the dead man's sabre and helmet; and close behind two troopers led his favourite charger, carefully groomed and caparisoned, his rug and saddle upon its back, and his boots with their toes pointing backward in the stirrups.

Next in order came three or four private carriages, followed by the rank and file of a cavalry regiment on foot, keeping step to the slow, melancholy rhythm of the music. It was a brave show. Yet, after all, it was but a sad sight, and the thick canopies of dark, grey clouds and the drenching rain were only in keeping with the glamour of sadness that shed itself over the whole of the pageant.

When the mournful procession had passed, the crowd at that particular point of the route quickly dissolved, and our friend of the shabby-genteel appearance speedily covered the last few yards of his journey and in two minutes stood at the entrance to the barracks. Here, muffled up in his cloak, the sentry on his beat was marching to and fro in a "brisk and soldierly" manner, wondering, no doubt, with a yearning longing, how far off or how near was the time when he would be relieved and at liberty to go and warm his inner and his outer man at the same time by the canteen fire.

But the man on sentry-go was not the only person about. In spite of the rain a trooper with bare head, shirt-sleeves rolled up to the elbows, and a whisp of straw in his right hand, as though he had come straight from the stables, stood upon the pavement gazing down the road. To him the old man determined to address himself.

"Can you show me Captain Mornish's quarters, please?" he asked.

The trooper looked the questioner over for a moment from head to foot. Then, changing the whisp of straw to the other hand, replied in a rich brogue:

"Did ye mane the Captin's ould quarthers or 'is new wans? If ye mane 'is ould quarthers, they're yonther ahint the far corner o' the square. If ye mane 'is new quarthers—well, he's-

on 'is way thare this very minit—rest 'is sowl!—an' they're over yonther" — pointing in a northerly direction — "in Glasnevin burryin'-ground."

"Then that was Captain Mornish's funeral I met a minute ago, and I am too late!" exclaimed the old man wearily, wondering how his employer would take the news when he heard it. As he spoke a chill blast swept round the corner and struck through his thin, saturated garments, penetrating to his very marrow. His pinched features assumed an ashen hue and he shook as one with ague.

A feeling of compassion stirred the trooper's warm Irish heart.

"By the looks of ye but 'tis a sup o' the craythur 'ud warrm the cockles o' yer hearrt, an' it's mesilf knows whare they kape the most illegant potheen atween 'ere an' County Clare. Stop 'ere, unther the shelther o' the wall, while I go an' find a rag fur mi back an' a thatch fur mi head, an' I'll be wid ye afore the sintry gets to the end of 'is bate!" With these words the good-natured Irishman hurried away, and returning in an incredibly short space of time, conducted the old man to a neighbouring public-house, where he set him before a roaring fire with a glass of steaming toddy at his elbow.

Under the combined influence of the external and internal application of warmth, the traveller's blood began to course with greater freedom through his veins, and he listened interestedly to the trooper's voluble praise of the late Captain Mornish.

"Ah! but 'tis a sorry day fur the rigiment! fur the Capting was the life an' soul o' the Leinster Lads. A bowld sodger an' a rale gintleman! Free wid 'is money—when he 'ad it—an' riddy wid 'is tongue! Whether it was a 'by yer lave!' or a 'damn yer eyes!' it was spoke wid the air of a thrue gintleman, an' sorra a wan but rispicted 'is worrd. Dhivil a wan of us thowt as we seed 'im ridin' off last Friday as gay as the larrk to 'unt wid the Kildare Houn's that afore the sun set ahint the Phaynix he'd be carried into the barricks wid the life out of 'im an' 'is back bruk clane in two—an' 'im that was to 'ave bin married next month to the swatest slip of a girl in all Leinster! Ah, I tell ye 'twas a cruil sight! an' it turned more than wan man's heart sick to see 't."

Frank, open honesty stared out from every feature of the

trooper's simple face, but his companion's calling had made him suspicious of outward appearances, and at this point of the recital the thought flashed upon him that perhaps the soldier, guessing his errand, was purposely fooling him and it might not be Captain Mornish who was dead after all. The possibility of such a thing gave him considerable anxiety, for he knew that if he returned to his employer with false intelligence of the debtor's death it would mean instant dismissal and, probably, beggary. No. He must have clearer proof than this man's bare word. For aught he knew the trooper might be the captain's servant, and as such would probably have instructions to mislead any suspicious parties.

Full of this idea he interrupted the soldier in the middle of a long string of enthusiastic eulogies, mumbled a few words of thanks, and shambled out into the street. The rain had ceased, but the lowering clouds still hung like a pall over the city, and, underfoot, the sodden snow, trampled into greasy slush by passing feet, made rapid walking an impossibility.

Buttoning his surtout up to his chin to keep out as much as possible of the biting wind, the old man turned his face to the north, and set off, as fast as his aching limbs and the state of the pavement would permit him, along the route taken by the funeral procession.

It was a long weary way to Glasnevin, and as he dragged one foot heavily after the other, he felt his old enemy, the rheumatism, gripping one by one his joints, until the pain was excruciating, and every single movement an agony of torture. Still the fear that he might be too late to effect his purpose kept him up, and at last, with tottering steps, he reached Glasnevin and staggered through the gates of the cemetery.

It was evident that the ceremony was all but ended, for as he entered the grounds the rattle of three volleys of musketry shook the heavy, damp-laden atmosphere. Then, as the last reverberation died away in a distant whisper, a trumpeter sounded the first shrill note of "the last post." Just at that very moment a rift appeared in the heavy masses of cloud above the western horizon, revealing a glimpse, as it were, of the glorious Heaven beyond the grave, and the cemetery was flooded with the golden glories of the winter sunset. The wondrous light shone full upon the pale face of a tall fair girl, in deep mourning, who stood

near the grave beside her mother, and glorified it into a beatific vision. The girl was Kathleen Cleary, the dead captain's betrothed. No trace of tears appeared upon her pale cheeks. Her grief was too deep for tears—idle tears—and no one would imagine that beneath that apparently cold and impassive front a well-nigh insupportable anguish was gnawing at her lacerated heart. She bore the shock bravely like some old Spartan heroine and did not parade her grief.

The trumpeter finished sounding "the last post," and the ceremony was over. The priest, good Father Blake, whispered a few words of soothing comfort into the maiden's ear. One last look at the coffin, and the two sorrowing ladies slowly retraced their steps to their carriage. The rift in the clouds closed up again, and in the waning light of the dying day the hoarse words of command were given and the procession re-formed.

While this was being done the wearied wayfarer hobbled painfully to the edge of the grave. If Captain Mornish's name was upon the plate of the coffin, then his doubts would be set at rest and he could at once return to England, knowing that he had done his duty and that nothing more was possible.

Standing upon the very brink he peered down into the trench, attempting to decipher the characters upon the burnished brass. His eyes were dim with cold, and he could not see very distinctly, but the name certainly did not look like "Mornish."

Stooping down to get a nearer view, while the grave-diggers, resting on their spades, stood behind him waiting to fill in the grave, he slowly spelled out the name:

"Richard Cluttering Wilber Plumstead."

The words petrified him. His heart stopped and his blood froze in his veins. His bag dropped from his nerveless fingers. It was only for an instant. Then came the reaction. Was it possible that there had been two Richard Cluttering Wilber Plumsteads in this narrow world? It was most improbable. The idea was quite untenable. Then this must be:

"Dick! Dick! Oh, my God! my Dick!" he cried. Then, with an impassioned, heart-piercing shriek, he leapt into the grave before the grave-diggers could restrain him, and flinging himself down upon the coffin-lid, he in his frenzy dug his finger-nails into the

hard wood, and passionately kissing the brass inscription plate, murmured in the sorrow-stricken words of David of old:

"Oh, my son, my son! Would God I had died for thee, oh, my son, my son!"

That wild, despairing cry reached the ears of Kathleen Cleary as she sat with her mother in their carriage, waiting to start on their return home. The grave was in sight. Turning sharply round she was in time to see the old man disappear. With an injunction to her weeping mother to stay where she was, she quickly alighted, and having spoken a few hurried words of direction to the coachman, made her way once more to the grave side, while the carriage drew out from the line and the troops moved off at a quick step to the tune of *Garry Owen*.

As the girl reached the grave of her dead lover, the two gravediggers were just assisting poor old Plumstead out of it.

"You knew *him*?" she said softly, placing her hand tenderly on the sobbing man's shoulder.

He started and looked wistfully into her face. The mysterious current of mutual sympathetic grief passed between them.

"*Knew him*? Oh, God! He was my son—my only son, whom I drove away from my door, and bade him never cross my threshold more!"

Could this man be an impostor? No. His words had the ring of truth in them, and yet her lover had always asserted that his father was dead—drowned at sea.

"But Captain Mornish had no father," she said gently.

"Who talks of Captain Mornish?" asked the old man, almost fiercely. "'Tis of Richard Plumstead I speak—of my son, my poor dead Dick!"

"Captain Mornish and Richard Plumstead were one. How that comes about I cannot tell you now, but you shall know by-and-bye. Neither can I understand yet how you can be his father, but I feel—I *know* that what you say is true. Your sorrow is my sorrow, for *he* was to have been my husband, and now—now—" For the moment it seemed as though she would break down, but she controlled herself and continued—"now he is in Heaven, and we shall meet him there. Come with me," and hand in hand the decrepit old man, looking fully ten years older than when he stepped ashore from the *Nora Creina* that

same morning, and the beautiful maiden threaded their way in the gathering gloom between the grass-grown mounds toward the waiting carriage.

"Mamma, this is Richard's father," was all the girl said, as she helped him into the vehicle.

"Richard's father? But Richard——" began Mrs. Cleary, when her daughter motioned her to silence, and not another word was spoken until the carriage drew up in front of a large house in Merrion Square, and the little party alighted.

In the privacy of Mrs. Cleary's boudoir the miserable man sobbed out his pitiful tale to the two ladies.

"How much Dick has told you I don't know," he began; "but I was not always the needy wretch I am now. No; until fifteen years ago I was Squire Plumstead of Plumstead Manor, with more friends than I can reckon, but they all forsook me when my troubles came and there were none to stand by me and give me a helping hand. My wife—my noble, loving Susan!—died when Dick was born. The child was all I had left to me and I petted and made much of him until he grew up a spoiled, wayward boy. It was all my own fault—Heaven forgive me!—I ought to have trained him differently. At eighteen I sent him to Oxford, where unfortunately he got mixed up in a wild, reckless set and took to gaming. Time after time I paid his debts of honour, always excusing him to myself with the old plea that 'lads will be lads,' until one day he came home with the news that he was expelled, and that he was in debt one way and another to the amount of two thousand pounds. Then my anger got the master of me. I turned him out and bade him never let me see his face again. He had all the old Plumstead pride in him, and I can see him now as he drew himself to his full height and assured me to my face that my commands should be respected to the letter. I never saw him again, although, when my anger had cooled down, I yearned for him with a fierce longing.

"The very day he left my roof—driven away into a cold, unfeeling world by the hand that ought to have guided and restrained him—misfortune entered. One by one my affairs went wrong, and ruin stared me in the face. Then it was that I was tempted, and I fell. I forged the name of one of my old friends to a bill for a large amount. My crime was discovered,

and I suffered the penalty of my folly. It might have been death, but on one point the prosecution was weak and the judge leaned to the side of mercy. Ten years after, when I returned to freedom, I was a broken man, and trod the streets of London on the brink of starvation. In my despair my thoughts turned to Dick—my boy. I was only too ready to forgive all—nay, to ask forgiveness of him. I learnt that he had enlisted in the Red Hussars, that he had risen to the rank of sergeant, and was even then in the North of England enlisting recruits for the Peninsula. I wrote to him a long pitiful letter, begging him to forget the past, and help me if he could. In due time I received his reply. He could not forget the past. His pride forbade it. *His* faults were little compared to the public disgrace *I* had brought upon the family name, and the terms I had myself dictated must ever stand between us. Nevertheless, he sent me my passage to New York by a vessel, *The Mauritius*, which was shortly to sail, and hoped that I should retrieve myself in a new world."

"But *The Mauritius* was lost, with all on board?" observed Kathleen.

"Yes, you are right," went on Plumstead; "but I was not on her. Just before she sailed I obtained employment with a London attorney, who saw I was a man of some education and might be useful to him, so I sold my passage at the last moment to another man, who embarked in my name, and ever since then I have been doing all the attorney's dirty work for a beggarly pittance that hardly kept body and soul together. It was he who sent me here to serve a writ for the recovery of a debt upon Captain Mornish. Little did I think it was my own son—my boy, of whom I had lost all trace—who was the debtor, but I arrived too late—too late!"

The old man's voice died away in a wail of anguish, and, burying his face in his hands, he wept bitterly. For fully five minutes no other sound than his convulsive sobs was heard in the apartment save the ticking of the timepiece upon the mantel. Then Plumstead raised his head, brushed his sleeve across his eyes, and said:

"Now, tell me how my son came to be known as Captain Mornish?"

The two women exchanged glances, and Kathleen began to speak in a sweet, sad voice.

"Mr. Plumstead," she commenced, "you will believe me when I tell you that I would not willingly pain you, but after what you have confided to us it is best that you should know the truth. Richard took the name of Mornish because his own family name had grown hateful to him after you had—had—after the indiscretion you mentioned, but it was not until a few years ago that he finally made up his mind to do so. You see, the colonel of the Red Hussars was called Mornish, and towards the close of military operations in the Peninsula Richard rendered him such efficient service in a delicate matter in which the Colonel's honour was at stake, that the latter, out of gratitude, gave him his commission. Fearing that he might not be regarded with proper respect by the men with whom he had served, first as a private and then as a non-commissioned officer, he exchanged into the Royal Irish Dragoons, where he was not known. He also thought that that was a favourable opportunity to disguise his identity under an *alias*, so, with his Colonel's permission, he assumed that officer's name, and in the name of Mornish his commission was made out. Before he had served six months with his new regiment he got his troop, and that is how he became Captain Mornish.

"When the sad accident occurred last Friday," she continued in a lower tone, "I was immediately sent for, and I was at his bedside when he died. His last words to me were: 'Let Father Blake bury me'—he adopted our religion a year ago—'and, Kathleen, for the memory of my poor old father, let me be buried in my own name!'"

"He said that?" exclaimed old Plumstead.

"He did."

"Then God be thanked!" and the old man slipped from his seat on to the floor in a swoon. The fatigue, the cold, and the shock had proved too much for his feeble strength.

When he had been restored to consciousness they brought him food and gave him hot drinks. It was the first kind treatment he had received since the sun of his prosperity had gone down behind the dark clouds of adversity, and it affected him strongly. A room was prepared for him; he was put to bed; and a few hours later they left him for the night

sleeping as peacefully as a child, with a smile of content resting upon his worn features.

The next morning when the servants came down they found the front door ajar, and investigation showed that the old man's room was empty.

Going to their daily gruesome task with pick and shovel over their shoulders, the Glasnevin grave-diggers found him in the uncertain light of the grey dawn stretched face downwards upon the grave they had filled in but the day before. His clothes were frozen hard, his limbs were cold and stark, but the smile still played upon his pinched face.

He had gone to join his son beyond the bourne.

W. CARTER PLATTS.

A Few West Country Superstitions.

BY CECIL LEIGH.

IN the heart of most people there lurks, generally unacknowledged, often even unknown to themselves, a feeling of awe and fear of the supernatural that closely resembles belief; and this notwithstanding our boasted civilisation and the broad light of science that is now being shed upon all things around, above and beneath.

If this is the case in the present day, it is not surprising that in the darker ages the great mass of the people, poor and ignorant as they were, should have been strongly imbued with superstitious fancies and fears.

Although superstition is now fast dying out, it still lingers in many parts of the country, as if loth to quit a world where it has so long been warmly cherished, even though its entertainers are often too much ashamed of their old-fashioned guest to acknowledge its presence openly.

Like all else, superstition has its favourite haunts; in some countries, like in some hearts, it has obtained but a feeble hold, while in others it has struck its roots so deeply that they absolutely refuse to be torn up and cast aside; this seems to have been particularly the case both in the North and in the "West Countree," where all sorts of seemingly most trivial facts and circumstances are looked upon as warnings and signs and omens, and it is curious as well as interesting to trace how most if not all these superstitions are associated with or have arisen from some religious custom or observance.

For instance, it is thought in Devonshire that if a child is born in May or weaned upon a Good Friday, it is sure to be unlucky; this probably arose from the fact that the month of May was dedicated to the Virgin, was the month of Mary, and from Good Friday being the great fast day of the year, with the Catholic Church, when all the faithful abstain from meat; even May kittens, or to give them their local name, "May chats," are

included in this idea, and not allowed to live, not for their own sakes, but because, if kept alive, they will bring sorrow and trouble on the house to which they belong.

Again, another idea is that whoever washes clothes on a Good Friday will wash one of the family away, that one of the household is sure to die before the next Good Friday comes round; but if it is unlucky for the washerwoman to ply her trade upon that particular day, it is a good time for the agriculturist to work, for, so runs the superstition, "whatever is planted in the earth on Good Friday will flourish abundantly and yield a large increase." These all clearly show their religious descent, and the superstition that if a robin sits on the window-sill or near a house and chirps mournfully, or taps with its beak against the window-pane—which they often will do in a severe winter, when accustomed to be fed—it is an omen of death, must, we fancy, have arisen, or be in some way connected with the quaint legend that tells how the robin gained its crimson breast. It runs thus:

"While our Lord was on His way to Calvary, a robin picked a thorn out of His crown, and the blood which issued from the wound, falling upon the bird, dyed its breast with red."

The chirping of a cricket on the hearth, and a dog howling without any apparent cause, are both looked upon as "signs of death being near"; the latter superstition is derived from an old Rabbinical source, as Longfellow mentions in his "Golden Legend."

"In the Rabbinical book it saith,
The dogs howl when with icy breath
Great Sammaël, the angel of death,
Takes thro' the town his flight."

There is certainly something very creepy and weird to hear suddenly breaking the stillness of a dark and quiet night, the mournful howl of a dog; and one can easily imagine that when superstition filled all men's minds, and witches and warlocks were universally believed to be abroad at night, intent upon their unholy work, how the hearts of the poor ignorant peasants must have quaked with fear when such dismal sounds disturbed their hard-earned rest.

There was one season, however, in which no evil spirit dared

"stir about," in which no evil work was done, and that season was the one

" Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
 then no planet strikes,
 No fairy takes, nor witch hath power to charm,
 So hallowed and so gracious is the time."

And at one time a belief very prevalent among the poorer peasants of the West was, that on the eve of Christmas Day, not only did the oxen kneel in their stalls, but that the very bees "sang in their hives in adoration of the birth of the King of all the earth."

It was also considered, and still is, very unlucky to leave the decorations of Christmas up until Candlemas Day. Herrick refers to this superstition in the lines :

" Down with baies and mistletoe,
 Down with the holly, ivie, all,
 Wherewith ye deck the Christmas hall.
 * * * * *
 For look how many leaves there be
 Neglected then (Maids, trust to me),
 So many goblins you shall see.

Witchcraft is still believed in to a certain extent, and there are still many persons who trade in this way upon the fears of their neighbours and bewitch or overlook with the evil eye those or their belongings who anger or annoy them in any way. But there are witches who do good as well as ill to their neighbours by charming away their ailments ; but, alas, the power of these charms is supposed to be lost when printed, and have only been preserved through the years past by having been handed down from parent to child by word of mouth ; strange to say, many of these charms or word-cures are said to succeed in the most wonderful way, which certainly speaks well for the large amount of faith with which the patient must have been imbued.

In some charms the sufferer is given some simple thing to do For the cure of warts, "Take a piece of twine, tie it in as many knots as you have warts, touch each wart with a knot, and then throw the twine behind your back into some place where it may soon decay—a pond or hole in the earth, but tell no one what you have done. When the twine is decayed, the warts will disappear without any pain or trouble," being in fact charmed quite away.

Another for ague is to go in the dead of night, five times, to a cross road, and there bury a new-laid egg. All this must be done in complete silence, else the charm will not work. The word-charm for cramp is so simple and quaint that, even with the fear of its losing its efficacy in the printer's hands, we write it :

" Cramp, be thou painless
As Our Lady was sinless
When she bare Jesus."

Deathbed superstitions are many; one common one is that the soul cannot depart if any door in the house is locked or bolted. Another belief is that if a dying person is lying on a bed made of goose feathers, the soul cannot depart, and there is one, that is well known in the North also, that none can die in the arms of those that are wishing to keep their dear one on earth.

Mrs. Gaskell in "Mary Barton" alludes to this touching superstition; and surely in the whole book there is no more pathetic incident than the one, where the poor mother in her unselfish love places her dying child in the arms of her sister with these words :

"May happen yo'd better take him, Alice, I believe my heart's wishing him a' this while. I cannot help longing to keep him, and yet he shan't suffer longer for me."

It is also considered very unlucky to turn any feather bed of a Sunday. And to plant lilies of the valley is more than unlucky, it is fatal to the person who plants a bed of them, he or she will be sure to die before twelve months have passed; to transplant parsley is also considered most unlucky. It may be sown with safety, though the saying is, that parsley seed never comes up quickly because it has a long journey to go before it takes root, which journey is popularly supposed to be to his Satanic Majesty's dominions. Perhaps the fear regarding the transplanted parsley is, that the roots may have to travel the same route.

Some birds are unlucky. The magpie, for instance, when seen alone, for as the old couplet has it :

" One is for sorrow, two for mirth,
Three's for a wedding, and four is a birth."

A Devonshire servant used to go nearly into fits if she saw

two knives crossed, but when asked the reason of this fear could give none except that "it was dreadfully unlucky." Another servant, a nurse, not a West-country woman, but one who hailed from the Emerald Isle, always tied a piece of salt into the skirt of the baby's frock to keep off the evil-eye, and always insisted upon carrying—the very day of its birth—a new-born infant upstairs, so as to make sure that, in the future, the child should go up and not down in the world; and on one occasion when there were no stairs to mount, she had a pair of steps brought to the bedroom, and in triumph carried the baby to the top of them.

Certain days of the week are considered lucky—Tuesday and Wednesday—and a certain hour upon Thursday, while Friday is considered a most unfortunate day, and anything undertaken for the first time upon that day is sure to be unsuccessful.

Bees are considered to take great interest in, and to have a great influence over their owners' welfare. They should never be bought for money, though goods may be given for a swarm, and they should never be removed from one hive to another except on Good Friday. On a death occurring in the house, the bees should at once be informed of the sad event, and on the day of the funeral wine and honey ought to be placed before their hives, and at the moment the corpse is carried out of the house the hives should be turned round.

A story relating to this custom is told in a newspaper of the last century, that at a funeral of a rich farmer, when someone called out "Turn the bees," a servant who did not know of this custom, instead of turning the hives round, lifted them up and laid them on their sides, upon which the angry bees flew out and attacked the funeral procession, who thereupon fled in all directions from their angry little assailants.

On the borders of Cornwall and Devon a custom prevailed when the bees swarmed of calling out "Brownny, Brownny," from a belief that this would prevent them from returning to their former hives, and induce them to pitch elsewhere, and form a new colony.

As is only to be expected in such apple-growing counties as Somerset and Devon, the welfare of the orchard is included in their superstitious doings. On New Year's Eve the ceremony of wassailing, or as it is locally called, of "apple-howling" is gone through.

A troop of boys encircle the apple trees, and say as they do so :

“ Stand fast root, bear well top,
Pray God send us a good howling crop,
Every twig, apples big,
Every bough, apples enow.
Hats full, caps full,
Full quarter sacks full.”

Then they all shout in chorus, while one of the party accompanies, and adds to the noise, upon the cow's horn.

In the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1791, the following account was given of a superstition very prevalent at that time in the South Hams of Devonshire :

“ On the eve of the Epiphany, the farmer, attended by his workmen, with a large pitcher of cyder, goes to the orchard and there, encircling one of the best bearing trees, they drink the following toast three several times :

“ Here's to thee, old apple-tree,
Whence thou mayst bud, and whence thou mayst blow,
And whence thou mayst bear apples enow.
“ Hats full ! caps full !
Bushel-bushel, sacks full
And my pockets full too ! Huzza ! ”

This done they return to the house, the doors of which they are sure to find bolted by the females, who, be the weather what it may, are inexorable to all entreaties to open them until someone has guessed at what is on the spit, which is generally some nice little thing, difficult to be hit on, and is the reward of him who first named it. The doors are then thrown open, and the lucky clodpole receives the tit-bit as his recompence. “ Some,” adds the above quoted writer, “ are so superstitious as to believe that if they neglect this custom the trees will bear no apples.”

An old superstition was that drawn teeth should be burnt with salt, to prevent the witches taking possession of them ; in the case of children's first teeth the idea was, that unless this was done the second ones would come in crooked.

To kill a black cat was considered most unlucky, it being popularly supposed that cats of that colour were in league with witches and the evil one, and that their death would be followed by punishment from some one or other of the powers of darkness.

These are but a few of the less well-known superstitions once popular, and even now not altogether forgotten in the West of England, notwithstanding the establishment of the school-board and its expensive machinery.

Foolish as these old superstitions undoubtedly were, there is yet something to be said in favour of those that held them ; they had what is sadly wanting in these enlightened days, faith, modesty and imagination, for, by these very superstitions they acknowledged that there were "more things in heaven and earth" than they either could or did understand. We, of the latter end of the nineteenth century, may smile at the foolish fancies held at the beginning, but those who are wise will sigh also, for is there not a fear that when the spirit of superstition is quite driven out of the hearts of our country folk, the other and worse spirits of doubt and unbelief will take possession of the empty chambers ?

Only a Smudge!

THE darkness of a winter's night was falling fast around an old gabled house in the beautiful Lake district. Already the jagged peaks of Langdale Pikes had become indistinct, and soon they would vanish as completely as their brethren, while, except for the bitter wail of the wind and the creak and strain of swaying trees, no sounds broke the silence of the lonely hills.

The old house possessed numberless queer tales concerned with its thick walls and winding passages, and for many a long year now had been haunted by the sins of the past—whose dreaded headless shapes were believed in, and shunned by most about.

The present master was well on in years, and, though still hale and hearty, in all human probability would not live many more years, and then—who was there but a slip of a girl, his orphan grandchild, to inherit alike his wealth and lands and all the traditions of the family?

Some said, but few believed them now, that the old man had no moral right to the place at all, for *his* father had been a younger son, whose elder brother, hot-headed, passionate, rash, had been disinherited for marrying a penniless girl, and on the day they married, the father, in unbridled rage, had willed all his possessions to the younger son, who took after him in many ways—certainly in being careful of his money—and far from persuading his father to alter his mind, had carefully fanned his wrath against the rightful heir, of whom but little was heard afterwards. That his young wife had died in a few years, and that he had gone abroad, was the sum total of intelligence that reached the old gabled house.

On the night young Mrs. Dane passed away, her old father-in-law had an awful dream, and after that he just shrivelled up and died, and the unjust will placed, beyond the power of alterations, all the possessions in the hands of the younger son who, though at the time he had diligently scoffed and pooh-

poohed his father's dream, yet lived to learn it was surely a message from the spirit-land.

* * * * *

The library was a cosy room, one much used by old Mr. Dane and his granddaughter, and now with a roaring fire and several lamps, with thick curtains closely drawn, they were chatting comfortably together. The old man seemed very restless, he could not sit still five minutes at a time, so that the answers to Olive's questions were rather jerky, but so interesting were the subjects to her, that sometimes she rose and joined him in his tramp about the room.

"What is that old rhyme you keep on muttering, grandfather, I never heard it before?"

"Likely not, likely not, and I don't know why it has got so into my head to-night, I can't keep it off my tongue—but there, child, there, it's nothing to do with you. Pray God it never may be anything," he whispered to himself.

Seeing he would not tell her, Olive began afresh:

"When will you give me the key of the ghost's passage? I want to see her myself, and you always said when I was grown up you'd let me try."

"*Want* to see her, oh! Good Lord, good Lord! what will she say next, and as for its being a *her*, why many say it is a man, no two ever say the same, except they are always headless, poor creatures."

"Oh, grandfather, won't you tell me the story?"

"No, child, no. I feel very tired to-night, talking of these old tales would only excite you and trouble me. I wish I had done what Carter asked me to do last time he came—but there, it's not too late now. Give me a sheet of paper, and call in Barton and Mrs. Phipps."

How the old man's hands shook as he tried the nib of his quill pen against his thumb nail, and in what a scrawl were the few words penned written, then his signature was duly witnessed by the two old faithful servants, and, with a satisfied sigh, Robert Dane leant back in his chair.

"There child, I can't write more, dry it for me."

Before Olive could take it from his shaking hands, the sheet with the undried writing fell on the floor, and in haste she picked it up and passed the blotting paper quickly over

it, and then by her grandfather's direction locked it up in his desk.

The servants had left the room, and when she turned from the side-table where the desk always stood, she saw the old man had fallen asleep, and so deep was his slumber, that the dinner-gong failed to arouse him, and Barton in alarm came to see what was the matter."

"Best let him have his sleep out, Miss Olive, my dear," said rosy-faced Mrs. Phipps. "Come you, and have your dinner while it's hot. Master mayn't wake for hours, and we'll soon get some soup hot when he does."

So Olive ate her dinner, chatting between whiles to old Barton, and commenting on the storm that was rising in angry clamour outside.

Still the old man slumbered on, and when Olive again bent over him, she called out in horror, for his face was all drawn down on one side, and his breathing was loud and hurried. With the coachman's help, they carried him to his bed, and put strong mustard to his feet and neck, but nothing roused him, and long before a doctor could be procured, still in the same deep stupor, as the clocks were striking eleven, the old man passed away.

* * * * *

"Dear! dear! to think he should go first, why I thought he'd outlive me by many a year."

Mr. Carter's face was very lined and troubled, and he kept pacing up and down the library, the day after the funeral.

"Now, Olive, my dear, we must think of you, you can't live here all alone, you know, I wonder what we'd better do. Did your grandfather tell you his wishes?"

"Oh, yes, godfather, often. He said if I had Mrs. Phipps and Barton with me, I should come to no harm, and he hadn't a relation in the world that he knew of to look after me, but *you* were better than a whole tribe of connections would be. Oh! and he signed a paper too, just before he fell asleep, have you seen it?"

"Thank God! Many and many a time have I been at him to make it straight in black and white. What was on it?"

"'I leave all I die possessed of to Olive Dane,' that was all, with his signature, for I was close beside him, and he didn't

mind my seeing ; he has told me again and again what I was to do about the property ; the old servants, whose leases on the farms could be renewed, and all sorts of things."

The girl's voice trembled, but quietly she opened the desk and handed the lawyer the sheet of note-paper.

In one moment his face had changed, the satisfied expression, so lately visible, died away in a great shock of surprise, and dismay stood out in every line and wrinkle ; with a start he walked over to the window, and read and re-read the few words of straggling inky writing.

Olive's gaze seemed fascinated by his face, her eyes grew large and troubled as she noted the knitted brows and puzzled frown with which he pored over the few short words. What could be wrong with them ? she wondered. A silence fell on the room, broken only by the coals in the fire dropping apart ; then with a long sigh the old man faced about.

"Who put this paper in the desk, Olive, and when ?"

"I did, directly I had dried it as grandfather told me. Why, what is the matter ?"

"Wait a second, child. Did you lock it up ? Think a minute, didn't you leave it on the table and forget it for a while ?"

"Grandfather held it out to me to dry directly Barton had put his name. I remember distinctly, it fell on the floor from his hand, and I rubbed the blotting paper over it, and locked it up in the desk at once, and when I turned round grandfather was asleep !"

"Now child read this :

" ' I leave all I die possessed of to *Oliver Dane*. ' "

Again a silence fell as both stared fixedly at the altered name, altered how and when ? But a half stroke to Olive's name, and instead of a wealthy heiress she stood a destitute girl !

"The one hope, the one chance for us is that there should be *no* Oliver Dane alive, and then perhaps if we can make it plain that *you* are the great-great-grandchild of old Oliver Dane, we may set it all right, but it is a sad pity that it is, and I had urged him so to leave it all clear for you !"

Mr. Carter ruffled up his hair in perplexity, and tramped about the room.

"Grandfather always wrote my name with a little dash at

the end, but I know he only put Ólive, not Oliver; what am I to do?"

"Do! Why stay quietly here, of course; we've got first to find an Oliver, pray God we never may. We'll take no steps for proving that bit of paper until we know one way or the other, and I don't despair things 'll be all right yet."

* * * * *

Far away, 150 miles from Natal, two or three white tents stood conspicuously out on the green Veldt; outside, round a fire, a group of Kaffirs squatted, enjoying their favourite snuff. For three days now they had been encamped here, whilst a fierce battle for life or death went on, unheeded by them, in one of the white tents.

Now the fight was nearly over, the strength quite exhausted, and to the tired eyes of the watcher beside that dying man, the end seemed very near.

"God bless you, Dane, for all you've been to me," had been the last conscious remark made by the poor swollen lips days ago, whilst still the little party were struggling bravely to reach Natal; then, as the disease made its rapid strides, it seemed cruel to move the poor fellow from his bed to the hastily improvised litter, and Oliver Dane had ordered a halt, and nursed his friend with untiring patience.

A doctor by profession, he had known for days what the end of the struggle would be, but from the weight of his own head, and the pain in his limbs, feared greatly that *he* should succumb before his friend actually died. He never troubled himself to fancy what would happen *then*, or who would care for him, and indeed, for many hours now the effort to think at all was beyond him, and he could but struggle still to fight off the stupefying drowsiness that was yet winning in the end. A week before, they had been passing through a native Kraal late in the day, when an awful storm came on, and the Kaffirs refused to proceed further that night. It was not until the mid-day halt next day, that Dane gathered from the men's gossip that small-pox was simply raging in the encampment of last night, and two days afterwards his friend and comrade sickened, and now lay dying. His eyelids closed in spite of the resistance of his will, then opened with a jerk and shut again in deep, overpowering slumber.

Swiftly the daylight faded, the shadows of night fell around, and the stars of God in countless brilliance looked down in peaceful calm on the pitiful earth-scene below, but one of how many visible to their bright radiance !

* * * * *

Olive found the old home very dreary in spite of all Mrs. Phipps' endeavours, and fretted sorely for her grandfather and his loving care. From room to room she roamed with an ever-increasing fear upon her, that after all the home she valued so greatly, and the dear familiar objects all about, would know her soon no more. The old woman told her many a quaint tale of the past, and, amongst other things, of the vivid dream that had impressed her great-great-grandfather so much, and of the old rhyme that had remained in his mind as a warning.

The number *three* shall always be
Sign of dread and woe to thee
Sorrows deep and shadows long
Who shall break the magic song ?
Until in darkness comes a third,
Rightful heir by blood and word.

Olive read for herself in church, how *always* since that far past time the number three had come in for the various deaths, and now there was yet another to be added to the list, for her grandfather had himself died on the 3rd of December, 1883.

Mrs. Phipps said there had been many and many a trouble and sorrow to bear besides—that had somehow always arisen, either on the 3rd, 13th, 23rd, 30th or 31st day of the month, and when the year itself held a 3, then nothing ever went well for long.

As for the headless ghost, she said *that* had appeared from the night when Oliver Dane had left his home for ever. In passionate anger at his father's threats, he had rushed wildly to his room and packed in desperate haste, then his door slammed with a loud and startling bang that sounded all over the quiet house, and before anyone knew what had passed between father and son, he had gone, never to return again.

That night, as the old man walked to his room, a headless figure, misty, indistinct, came slowly from the opposite end of the long, narrow passage, and then it was gone !

The master changed his room, but the story grew, and at last

it was found advisable to close the wing and lock the door, and no one had been in that part now for years.

Olive took in the old stories with eager interest, and resolved in her own mind that some time she would try for herself.

One cold night in January, she sat and thought of recent events until she felt restless and excited. The days of her happy childhood came vividly before her, then the close companionship with her grandfather, and the sudden shock of his death, with all the sad details. Again and again in fancy, she went over the writing of the paper, wondered if a loose hair or thread in the carpet could have altered the name, or if she had used a worn-out bit of blotting paper in her haste. That no one had tampered with it she felt certain, for who but herself knew where it had been placed?

Several times had Mr. Carter questioned her on the subject, but the mystery remained unsolved.

Of a sudden her desire to visit the ghost passage flashed into her mind, there was no time like the present—she would go at once.

The house was very silent for it was late, long after eleven, in her musings she had quite forgotten the flight of time.

Armed with a candle, matches, and the key which hung as usual on her grandfather's bunch, she went upstairs, turned the key in the closed door, pushed it open with some difficulty, and passed through, holding her candle high above her head. Dust was everywhere on floor and walls and hanging in long cobwebs from the vaulted ceiling above. The passage was very narrow and of great length, the air was heavy and oppressive, and a damp, mouldy smell made her feel sick and faint.

Surely *that* is a figure coming slowly along with a light shining round her in the deep gloom of the gallery; hesitatingly and yet steadily nearer the figure approaches, headless as she had been warned so often the apparitions always were! A cold chill ran over her from head to foot, and just as *something* went squash under her trembling steps, and she almost screamed with fright, the heavy door swung to behind her, and the sudden draught extinguished her candle.

With hands stiff from fright she struck or tried to strike a match, but her fingers either shook too much, or in her flurry

she tried the wrong side of the box and she could not light one. Instinctively she backed from the dread Presence that might by now be so near her, fearing in another minute a clammy hand might grasp her, or a weird sigh sound in her ears, stumbled against the door, which was a swing one, and was safe on the other side, her curiosity more than satisfied, and with not the shadow of a wish remaining ever to behold that misty moving form again, come what might! In haste she turned the key and shaking in every limb descended the stairs, with many a backward glance; quicker and quicker went her feet, urged by that nameless dread, and not until she had shut the library door, and sunk into one of the deep old chairs, did her fluttering heart grow quiet, and her mind begin to reason on what she had really seen.

A misty, moving figure slowly coming towards her, illumined by an unearthly light that only lasted a few minutes.

Oh! coward, coward, why had she not waited calmly its approach?

* * * * *

February 12th.

DEAR OLIVE,

At last I can send you some news, but first let me state, I have shown the paper to several of the cleverest lawyers of the day, and asked them how they read it. One and all, quite laughed at me, they said the "Oliver" was so plain.

There are therefore two courses open to you, to contest the will, go into court yourself and fight for the possession, or for you to resign all claim once and for ever, and come and be another daughter to me.

Most probably you would gain your suit, though all the long-buried past would have to be dug out, and the disinheriting business gone into—very unpleasant publicity for a girl of nineteen.

Then there *is* an Oliver Dane, the great great-grandson of that hot-tempered old man who justly or unjustly deprived his eldest son of his birthright. *The* Oliver is an orphan and a doctor, said to be a clever man, and is at present travelling for his health somewhere in S. Africa. That branch of the family seem to have had hard times, but in spite of all, they bear a good name, and have always been respected.

On hearing your decision I will write again ; should you come to us, I must let this fellow know.

Your affectionate godfather,
W. CARTER.

This was the letter that greeted Olive one fine morning as she sat at her lonely breakfast. Over and over again she read it, feeling as if to leave the old home would almost break her heart, and as if death itself would be preferable to giving up for ever the place and things she so dearly loved.

It was her grandfather's intention she should inherit after him. A stranger would have no interest in anything—what cruel fate had come upon her?

Ah! that was it—Fate—or should we not rather say in a higher, truer sense, the finger of God in His Almighty Providence setting a cruel wrong right.

In a minute, as the conviction flashed upon the girl that for her to resist and rebel was useless, *she*, a mere atom in the universe, clear as it had appeared before that old, old man, his vivid dream took shape and form! A bright, weird light filled all that quiet room of long ago, and close beside the sleeping form a white-robed figure stood, with warning gesture and impressive power, and the echo of the quaint old doggerel, she now knew by heart, floated all around :

The number *three* shall always be
Sign of dread and woe to thee,
Sorrows deep, and shadows long
Who shall break the magic song?
Until in darkness comes a third,
Rightful heir by blood and word.

* * * * *

February 18th.

DEAR CHILD,

Your decision is a right one, I believe, about the property, but I am sorry you are so determined to be independent ; however, young people will go their own way, now-a-days, and it happens oddly enough I know of a really nice old lady who wants a travelling companion—liberal terms and light duties—and I have arranged for you to have an interview with her next week, so please come here on Monday. I have

advertised at once for Oliver Dane, for no one knows quite where he may be. Mrs. Phipps and Barton must take charge of the house until we know the new owner's wishes. I am writing them full instructions. All join me in love.

Your affectionate godfather,

W. CARTER.

* * * * *

"'Dane'—did you say 'Oliver Dane' was advertised for?—pardon my interrupting you, but the name caught my ear."

"Don't mention it—we were but saying what a time this notice had been inserted for. Week after week, and month after month."

"Allow me," and the tall man who had risen so quickly from the comfortable chair in the club room, read the sentence for himself.

"Will Oliver Dane send his present address to W. Carter, Middle Temple, at once. Important news."

"A friend of yours?" hazarded one of the trio beside him.

"Ay, about the best fellow I know, poor chap. I'll go and see Mr. Carter at once. Good evening, gentlemen."

* * * * *

"You say you found him quite unconscious beside his dead friend, and that it was touch and go he pulled through himself?"

"Yes, I shall never forget that evening, it was the saddest thing I've ever seen. I learnt afterwards that it was only by the greatest self-denial Dane was able to pay all the fees of his profession, and then his mother, whom he almost idolized, fell into a lingering illness that only ended with death. Then the long strain on an over-taxed frame would no longer be ignored, and he was ordered complete change of scene and rest. His friend, young Allen, a wealthy man, had a fancy for big game, and they had been quite a year travelling about when I came across them in their sad plight.

"When Oliver pulled round a bit, we had a lot of chat, and one night he told me that long ago his ancestors had been wealthy people, but his great-great-grandfather had married

against his father's will, and been disinherited. That the disliked daughter-in-law only lived a few years and then died, but that waking suddenly on the night she passed away, after some hours' sleep, she told her husband that in her dream she had visited his old home, and delivered a message to his father; she could not remember all the lines, but one was to the effect that in darkness an heir should come, and the wrong be righted."

"Strange, strange how things come about in the little lives of men, against the Almighty's will. I thank you very much for your help, Mr. Austen, we are on the right track now."

* * * * *

The crowded through-train was rushing on. Brussels was left leagues behind, Basle was the next important halt, when all of a sudden the brakes were sharply applied, stopping the train with a jolt and a jar felt severely by many of the passengers, and the conviction of something amiss grew apace.

Olive Dane sat quiet in her corner, waiting for the next move, and wondered again as she had done over and over in the last few hours why her opposite neighbour sat so motionless, with his large eyes gazing dreamily out of the window, apparently lost in a world of the past.

Most men would have had their heads and as much of their bodies also as possible out of the window ages ago, when first the brakes were applied, but not even an air of curiosity appeared on his plain face—plain—well, *any* face with such swollen features would look plain, but there *had* been a time when no one would have used that word to describe her fellow passenger.

A guard flung wide the door, and ordered them all to alight at once, then hurried on to another carriage.

Olive and her old lady, who had been sound asleep when the train stopped, were out of the carriage in no time, though as a rule, Mrs. Chirp took a good while ascending or descending from a compartment. A feeling of anger and contempt filled the girl's mind as she noticed their fellow-passenger did not offer to assist them in any way, and it was an awkward step to the level of the ground.

"Bear," muttered Olive under her breath, as she saw her *vis-à-vis* stand up, and begin feeling for something in the rack; then in the confusion around she forgot him for a bit.

The bearings of one of the wheels had got over-heated, and the carriage caught fire, which had spread with awful rapidity, several carriages were already alight, the one they had left being quite the worst, for dense smoke was coming up between the boards of the floor, and bright little flames were shooting out in all directions.

"All out, of course," one Englishman remarked to another, "and none too soon either."

A dreadful doubt flashed over Olive's mind. In haste, she turned, and pushed her way to the door of their compartment; a dark figure standing as she had left him, quickened her fears.

"Make haste, sir," she called, "don't you see the flames? what madness to linger?"

"I am blind, and I can't find the door—I but tried to feel a small bag of importance and then could discover no opening, perhaps the smoke bewildered me."

"For God's sake, give me your hand and hurry. All the people are busy trying to prevent the fire spreading, and emptying the luggage vans; now then, three short steps, and one long one, and you will be on the ground."

The smoke was stifling, and it seemed hours to Olive before she got her helpless charge safe out of reach of the flames, which darted eagerly at him as if hungry for their prey.

"I cannot thank you—to whom do I owe my life? I must seem very stupid to you, but I have not been blind long enough to be independent."

"My name is Olive Dane."

"Dane! why that *is* queer—mine is Oliver Dane. It was my mother's likeness I tried to save. Well, most things go from me, I seem to have been born under an unlucky star."

"Found at last!" exclaimed Olive. "Mr. Carter *will* be glad; why, we are cousins!"

* * * * *

The sunset splendour of a summer's sun was gilding Langdale Pikes with a lovely light, so beautiful that two pedestrians stood still in their steady tramp to watch the golden glory fade.

"Yes," continued the elder man, pointing to an old, old house, "I little thought to see such good come out of apparent evil when my old friend died so suddenly, it seemed such a mess all round."

"Well, you found Dane all I told you, and more, didn't you?"

"He *is* a good fellow, and a happier couple you'd go far to find, a power for good all about. When you think how at one time trouble after trouble fell upon him—mother, health, friend, sight, profession, all taken from him, that he should have come out of it all so perfectly happy and contented, speaks well for the sterling worth of the man. And Olive has had her trials too, poor child, but there!—I get prosy. Did you ever hear the end of the ghost?"

"No, I left England again after the cousins' marriage and no news has reached me since."

"Well, you know all about the train being on fire, but perhaps you never heard that Olive wouldn't tell Oliver of his new possessions, said she wanted to know him better, and *I* was the proper person. When I arrived on the scene, the two were great friends, and he refused absolutely to usurp Olive's rights, for he said her grandfather had intended her to have the place, and so she should.

"There is no saying how the matter would have been settled if, in turning over some old papers, I had not come upon the will of the first Oliver Dane, who built the house, etc., and I found there it was left absolutely, and for ever, to heirs male, daughters could not inherit. A portion, and an ample one, was to be their dower. This settled the affair once and for all, but then I got a hint from Mrs. Chirp to bide a bit, and hold my tongue, and soon after came Dane's letter to me, saying *both* were going to take possession. The first night they came down here they went together to the Ghost's passage, and, rendered brave by her husband's presence, Olive ventured along the narrow vaulted corridor.

Two misty figures came to greet them, but as they went further down the passage the ghosts suddenly disappeared, and when they reached the poor son's room, right at the end, the mystery was plain, and very simple.

An old convex glass hung loosely from the wall above the door with a three-cornered piece cracked and gone right down the middle, and the ghosts of the wing were the reflections only of those who visited the gallery; the violent slam of the disinherited son's door had not only broken the glass, but shaken it roughly from its proper place, and freed it from the thick curtain of

dust that for ages past had covered it over in its exalted perch.
The floor was a moving mass of black beetles.

And so the ghost was laid, the old doggerel played out, and all is well.

Dane not only came in darkness, but is the third to inherit since his great-grandfather's time, and though Olive dislikes the number "3" in any form, no harm has happened since to keep up the old superstition.

The number three shall always be
Sign of dread and woe to thee,
Sorrows deep and shadows long
Who shall break the magic song?
Until in darkness comes a third,
Rightful heir by blood and word.

E. YOLLAND.

A Cornish Maid.

By BARBARA LAKE,

Author of "THE BETRAYAL OF REUBEN HOLT," "A PROFITLESS QUEST," etc. etc.

CHAPTER XIV.

JENNY IS BROUGHT TO BOOK.

WHEN it first became known in Treverdale that Jenny Caerden had cast off Clem Freer for Tom Penrose, public opinion went dead against her ; and, though it was authoritatively asserted that "it was only what everyone had expected," the general voice was loud in its surprised condemnation of her conduct. When, however, it further became known that Clem had been systematically neglecting the girl—that he had not written to her for upwards of two months, the tide of popular feeling began to turn in her favour, though it was nearly a week after the dance at the Mill House before the change in her prospects became public property.

From a natural feeling of pique, or perhaps from some other feeling best known to herself, Jenny had hitherto withheld the knowledge of Clem's supposed neglect from everyone but Mary Seaton, and her she had bound to secrecy. But now, she deemed it wise to make the most of her discarded lover's shortcomings—industriously spreading abroad the story of her wrongs. And the result of this was that her friends and acquaintances shifted their ground, and soon came to the conclusion that she was perfectly justified in taking the course she had elected to follow.

Besides, limping Miller Penrose was anything but a favourite with his neighbours, and they were not at all grieved by the reflection that he was likely to find a master-spirit in the girl he was about to make his wife. So, in the end, the good folks of Treverdale were satisfied with the new order of things—quickly transferring their sympathy from poor, absent Clem, to lucky Jenny Caerden ; and her approaching marriage with the miller was looked forward to and discussed with lively interest.

"Ha' any o' you heard t' news that's going round t' town?" asked Mrs. Taptun of "The Foaming Beaker," addressing a select circle of cronies gathered about a blazing fire in her bar-parlour, a couple of evenings after the miller's party.

"I ha'n't heard no special news, for wan," said Farmer Lane, taking a long clay pipe from his lips to make the reply. And this disclaimer being followed by a chorus in the same strain from the others, Mrs. Taptun sat herself down to the pleasant task of imparting tidings not, as yet, generally known.

"Waal," she began, bent on spinning out her narrative, "you all knaw Jenny Caerden, doan't you?"

"For sure us do," assented Farmer Lane. "So handsome a maid as she, isn't like to be overlooked in such a place as Treverdale."

"No, un ain't," agreed Mrs. Taptun. "But whaat do you s'pose her's goin' to do?"

"Lord, who can tell what a maid will do?" exclaimed Lane. "Maybe she's off up to London, after Clem Freer."

"Not her! No; I always said Jenny Caerden was a bit flirty an' changeful, an' I always said her 'ud do something, some day, as 'ud maak us all stare; but I never thought her 'ud cast off Clem Freer to wed Tom Penrose. An' *thaat's* what her's done!"

"The daavil she has!" was Mr. Lane's low, surprised comment; while every eye in the circle was turned inquiringly on the landlady. "Cast off Clem Freer for such a chaap as Penrose? You don't say so, Mrs. Taptun?"

"Eh, but I do though, an' her's to be wedded afore t' year's a month old!"

"Waal, I'm bless'd—dashed if I ain't! But now, I come to think of it, my missus has been saying the maid was carrying on with Penrose, a bit; but it beats cock-fighting to think of chucking up Freer to marry such a niggardly, ill-looking chaap as him! Whaat's her faather think o' it, Mrs. T.?"

"I ha' n't seen nothing o' un," returned Mrs. Taptun; "but Jenny ses he's clean daft wi' joy."

"But what can Clem Freer be about to let the girl serve him so?" asked Maltster Brooks, addressing the landlady.

"Ah, *thaat's* where 'tis, you see!" returned Mrs. Taptun. "Clem Freer hasn't been treating t' maid waal, it seems; an' I b'lieve 'tis his own fault if her's given him t' go-by. Jenny

Caerden's too han'some an' spereted to take a slight from any man, an' no blame to her for it, neither!"

"'Tis no credit to her, if she's cast Freer off without some very good reason," remarked Mr. Lane; and there was a general murmur of assent from his masculine hearers.

"Waal, thaats what I said, when I first heard o' the matter," rejoined Mrs. Taptun. "I said her ought to be ashamed o' herself, for breacking wi' un, an' I half think so still. But when I dropped in this morning to ask her if whaat folks was saying could be true, her told me her hadn't heard from Clem for months back. Her said he hadn't answered wan o' the letters her had sent, begging an' praying him to write to her."

"I shouldn't have thought that of Clem Freer; but if he has treated the maid so, he 'ull have no right to complain if she gives him tit-for-tat."

And again Mr. Lane's remark called forth a murmur of assent.

"She's just the one to ride rough-shod over a man, once he's tied to her, hard and fast," put in Mr. Meake, a neighbouring brewer, who was, himself, supposed to be systematically henpecked by his wife and daughters. "The miller won't dare say his soul's his own, if she chooses to say it isn't. Won't she make his money fly, too. Lord! how she'll make him sweat and fume, once she gets the handling of it. They say his party, the other night, was a miserly set out—not half enough to eat and drink. But I expect she'll alter all that when *she* rules the roast!"

"Don't you be too sure of that, friend," said Brooks. "I've had a good many dealings with Tom Penrose, and my opinion is she'll be a clever woman that loosens *his* purse-strings!"

"Eh, she 'ull need be that!" agreed Mr. Lanc. "Tom Penrose is an out-an'-out scrunt, an' not a bit fit to have aught to do with a young maid."

"So I say," observed Mrs. Taptun, "an' so do a lot o' other folks I could name. But Jenny Caerden's got a rare high speret o' her own, spite o' her smiling ways, an' I think, as Mr. Meake does, that her 'ull teach the miller what's whaat, soon as ever her's got firm foothold on his hearth. An' I'm sure I hope she may, for thaats matter, though I must say I never thought much o' she, myself."

"She's too handsome for you women's taste, eh, Mrs. Taptun?" laughed Mr. Lane.

"Awh, I'm sure I doan't know about that! Han'some is as han'some does, 'tis said."

"Anyhow," said Lane, she seems to ha' got a rare lift in life; for Mrs. Tom Penrose 'ull be a very different person to lazy Luke Caerden's daughter, and I, for one, sha'n't mind taking her hand an' wishing her waal. As for Clem Freer—if he has treated the poor little thing badly, why, he deserves to lose her. She's quite roight to do the best she can for herself; and that's all I have got to say on the matter!"

And this opinion of Mr. Lane's was soon the opinion of nearly everyone in the village; for it is but human to lean to the winning side.

"Plate tin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
Arm it in rags, and a pigmy's straw doth pierce it."

But Jenny Caerden herself, now that the die was cast—now that she had renounced Clem's claims on her, and had transferred her allegiance from him to the miller, seemed far less happy and satisfied than might reasonably have been expected. She was as peevish, as fretful, and as unreliable as a weather-cock. One day, she would be in the wildest of high spirits, running in and out of the smithy kitchen to show Mary some bit of finery she had just made up as an addition to her limited *trousseau*, expatiating on the beauty of the piece of grey silk the miller had given her for a wedding dress (a present, by the way, which had not cost him a penny, seeing that it had been amongst his late wife's possessions before she became Mrs. Penrose), or talking gaily of what she meant to do in the future. On another day, she would sit idly moping over Mary's cheery fire, wishing she had never seen the miller, that she had never seen Clem, that she herself had never been born or that she was dead and in her grave.

By her perverse and varying moods, too, she was placing a nice bundle of rods in the miller's hands, to "pickle" for her own chastisement, in the days to come; while he, good man, vowed to himself that he would "teach her a lesson," once he had her in his power.

And the foolish girl certainly did lead him a pretty dance by her capricious shilly-shallying. For she would seldom respond ever so little to his fulsome love-making, while to his constant urgings that she should name a day for their wedding, she returned but the vaguest and most contradictory of replies. She would be married at once, had been her first declaration; then, she would not marry for at least a year. Again, she would be wed when the spring flowers came into bloom, and again, not until the autumn. Then, she "didn't know *when*" she would be ready to be wed, and finally, she did not "s'pose" she should ever be married at all!

It is little to be wondered at, then, if the miller's patience was exhausted and his evil temper roused to boiling point. He had thought to be married before the first month of the year was out, and now, here he was, close on the end of the second, and the event apparently as far off as ever. He was deep enough to guess something of Jenny's state of mind, but anyhow, and come what might of it, he was determined to marry her, and that, without further delay.

He was a craven coward at heart, and he had a wholesome dread as to what might be the result if Clem Freer should happen to return to Treverdale before the nuptial knot could be tied—broken bones for himself, at the very least, he reflected, with the probable loss of the girl he had sworn to win, as a pleasant sequel to the whole business. So he resolved to settle the question of his wedding day, himself; and, with this end in view, he sat down to indite such an epistle to his freakish bride elect, as should bring her to book without further dallying—the following creditable composition being the outcome of his determination:

"Mill House, Treverdale,

"February 13, 18—.

"MY OWN DARLING JENNY,

"If you had not told me so often that you no longer care for Clem Freer, I should think you was pining for him spite of all his neglect, for I can't think what else makes you hold off getting married as you do. If you are sorry for promising to wed me, you've only got to say so, and I will take up with some other maid to once. I am very fond of you I don't deny, and I shall never love another maid as I do you, or care to do

so much for her, for I would give you all you want without a word, and you should always do as you like. But if you think you won't care to be a wealthy lady after all and have a carriage to ride about in, there is plenty that will, and you can let me have back the piece of dress-silk I gave you to be married in, so as I can take it up to Sam Downses the butcher's daughter Sally, who I know would be glad to wed me at a hour's notice if I asked her to. So, my own darling Jenny, you can do as you like. You know us was to be married the back end of January and now 'tis nigh on March and nothing settled. But I mean to put up the banns on Sunday, either for you or Sally Downs, and I mean to be married to you or she as soon as the time is up. But you sharnt wed me if you dont want to, my darling, for you shall always do as you please, and I would never ask you to do nothing you dont want to, but if you mean to marry me at all, you must be ready as soon as the banns are called. I will come to see you to-morrer, and you can either hand me the silk for Sally or else tell me you 'ull be ready by my time. So no more from

"Your true and devoted lover,
"THOMAS PENROSE."

The miller sat grinning and chuckling as he read and re-read his wily epistle, for every sentence had been well considered and its effect calculated. It was a perfect *chef-d'œuvre* in its writer's estimation, and, as he folded and addressed it, he felt quite confident that it would fulfil its mission satisfactorily.

And he was right in his conclusions.

Yet Jenny's first feeling upon mastering the contents of the crafty letter, was one of relief at the prospect of liberty it held out to her. For, unknown even to herself, she had been hoping all along for some news of Clem Freer; and she had unwittingly hesitated to raise up an impassable barrier between him and herself by a too hasty marriage with Tom Penrose.

That she detested the miller, and that she loved Clem Freer with all the passion of which her selfish nature was capable—and all the more perhaps, because of his seeming neglect—there could be no doubt. But she thought to have it all her own way with Tom Penrose—to lord it over him, his purse and his household in autocratic style; and as she sat with his letter in her hand,

weighing her chances of happiness as his wife, against the love she strove so hard to think dead, the balance went slowly, but none the less surely, down on the miller's side.

Alas and alas, for her decision !

CHAPTER XV.

FARMER LANE GOES TO LONDON.

THE weather was bright and dry, but the mid-March wind was keen and boisterous—blowing up blinding clouds of dust and driving it, indiscriminately, up street and down, and through every thoroughfare, aristocratic or otherwise, of wealthy and busy London. It was all very seasonable, perhaps, but by no means pleasant ; and Clem Freer frequently found himself longing for the more genial breezes of far-off Cornwall.

These longings were, as he knew, impossible of gratification—for some time to come, at any rate ; but he obtained a negative sort of pleasure from the fact that many of the passengers who arrived at or departed from the station where he was employed, either came from or were bound to that county which he called his own. The up-coming and down-going trains seemed, too, to form a sort of link between himself and his old associates, and he was constantly on the look-out for a familiar face or a friendly, recognising glance.

He had changed a good deal, in both manner and appearance, since his residence in London—the healthy bronze of his handsome countenance having given place to more delicate colouring ; while the fine curves of his lips had settled themselves into sterner lines than of yore.

He still called Mrs. Reader's poor little domicile "home," and thought nothing of the two-mile-long walk twice in the twenty-four hours, to and from the scene of his labours ; but all gaiety, all happiness seemed to have faded out of his life, and he went through his regular round of duty with a dull and listless air, that would have struck those who had known him in happier days, as very sad.

He was quite a puzzle to poor, hard-working Mrs. Reader, who could by no means understand his new silence and reserve. He had never been particularly communicative as regarded his private affairs, but in the earlier days of their acquaintance he

had told her of the lovely girl who was some day to be his wife—the girl who was waiting, so patiently, down in the Cornish village of Treverdale, while he made his fortune, up in London. But he never spoke of her, now.

For Clem was eating his heart out in vain conjecture as to the cause of Jenny's treatment of himself, and his thoughts of her had become very bitter. Why had she not answered his letters? he asked himself—the long, loving letters that had told of his accident and consequent bout of sickness, of his long detention in the hospital? Of course it did not occur to him that his letters might have miscarried, or that Sam Reader was in the slightest degree untrustworthy; and he was too full of anger and resentment to write to Jenny, again.

His suspicions never once glanced towards Miller Penrose, but he sometimes wondered, with a fierce rush of wrath, whether Will Ashdown was striving to win Jenny's love from him, and whether she might be disposed to respond. But, he reasoned, supposing this to be the case, would she not have written to claim the freedom he had once offered her? Surely, she would! Again, might she have left home to go into service, and so have missed his letters? This was possible, but even in that case, she would have written to tell him of her change of residence. These and a dozen other problems passed and repassed, through his mind—only to be rejected as unfeasible; and poor Clem was fast falling into a condition of moodiness and melancholy.

But when the aforementioned March-wind was blowing its aggravatingest, a new idea came to rouse him from his growing dejection. Could Jenny, like himself, have been ill? Might she not be ill, and very ill, even at the present moment? How strange that this idea should not have occurred to him before! For, of course, that was the solution of the mystery—that, the cause of her silence—his Jenny was ill! What a fool he must be not to have thought of this before! What a brute to have been thinking hard things of her, his poor, pretty little maid, and she lying ill and unable, perhaps, to hold a pen! And yet—and yet—if she had been incapable of writing to tell him of her state, how was it someone else had not done so?—Mary Seaton, for instance.

This was a difficult question to answer; but he was so re-

lieved by the thought that he had at last hit upon the true explanation of Jenny's silence, that he would not give way to a single doubt as to the accuracy of his surmise. He clung to the idea as a drowning man might cling to the proverbial straw, and beneath its softening influence his heart again became loving and tender towards the girl who was even then about to put the finishing touch to her falsity.

Yes ; his Jenny must have been ill, thought Clem—was ill even now. It was the only thing likely to keep her from writing to him, and though it was grievous enough to picture her as sick and suffering, it was better than to think her wilfully silent or indifferent. Poor darling, if only he had the right and the means to nurse her back to health and comfort ! But he would write to her—he would write to her once more, and immediately. He would recapitulate all the news contained in his two former letters, and would end by praying for a few words of reply, even though they should be written by some other hand than her own.

And once his letter was fairly on its way to Treverdale—for he posted it himself, this time—he went to his work with a lighter and more hopeful heart than he had known for many weeks past.

But is not hope constantly telling “a flattering tale ?” Does it not constantly happen, when our hearts are at their lightest, that some sudden sorrow falls upon us and blots out all our content ? Someone says that the path of sorrow alone leads to that land where sorrow is unknown. And this, no doubt, is true, though, perhaps, the saying scarcely applies to the case in point. But be that as it may—on the afternoon of the day following the one on which Clem had posted his letter to Jenny Caerden, he was standing just within the barriers on an up-platform of the Great Western terminus when, amongst the passengers who had arrived by the 3.45 train, he caught sight of the burly figure of Mr. Lane, the Treverdale farmer.

The recognition was not immediately mutual, for though Mr. Lane turned a look of puzzled incredulity on the younger man, it was only when the latter laid a detaining hand on his arm, calling him by his name, that he awoke to the conviction that it was Clem Freer who stood by his side.

“What ! is it you, Clem Freer ?” cried the farmer, with anything but exuberant cordiality of manner.

"Well, I believe so, farmer," laughed Clem, a little grimly. For Mr. Lane had feigned not to see the hand which the young fellow had half held out to him. "I don't know who else I'm like to be!"

"But what are you doing here, and in this get-up?" indicating the other's uniform.

"I'm one of the company's servants," returned Clem.

"What, a railway-porter?"

"Ay, a railway-porter. A fine calling to make a fortune on, isn't it?"

"But, God bless my soul! couldn't you have found something better to do, man, than railway-portering?"

"It seems so, doesn't it?" asked Clem, by way of reply. "If I haven't found something better to do, 'tisn't for the want of looking for it, anyway."

"E'm! But you'll never make a fortune at this sort of thing, I'll go bail, Clem Freer!"

"No; I don't expect to. But I have been promised quick promotion; for it fell in my way to do a service to a gentleman who's got some interest in the line, and he tells me he will make it his business to see that I get on. I haven't been here much over two months, as yet, and except that it seems to give me the chance o' seeing a friendly face once in a way, the work's not to my liking. But 'tis better than starving—far."

"Why, yes; but I shouldn't ha' thought there was much chance of a clever young chaap like you starving in such a crowded place as London. There must be plenty of work, and good paying work, for those that's willing to do it."

"Ah, that shows you know as little about London, farmer, as I did when I came up last summer to make my fortune. 'Tis as easy to starve in the thick of crowds as 'twould be in the middle of a—wilderness."

"Waal, it may be so, for aught I can tell. 'Tis seldom enough I come to London, and I doan't know much about it. I wouldn't come up at all if 'twarn't needful."

"You come on business, then? When did you leave Treverdale?"

"I come mostly on business, and I left Treverdale first thing yesterday morning. But I broke my journey at Newton Abbot, to stop the night with a friend, so I got here pretty early, you

see. But 'tis late hours for my dinner, and I'm going to get a bit, as soon as maybe. So I'll say good-bye to you, Freer."

"Stay a moment longer," pleaded Clem eagerly. "I won't keep you over a minute or two, but I—I am so anxious to hear—— Well, I am heart-sick for want of a bit of news from Treverdale."

"News from Treverdale?" echoed the farmer. "Waal, thaat's good, upon my life! 'Tis a pity you haven't *acted* as if you wanted a bit, my lad. News from Treverdale, fersooth! Why haven't you tried to get it, then, and before now?"

"Tried to get it?" asked Clem, with a bewildered look. "What do you mean, farmer? I don't understand?"

"Oh, come now, young man, that's all bosh, you know," expostulated Mr. Lane testily. "There's plenty o' news knockin' about, and you could have had it for the asking. But just you look here—I want my dinner, and I am going to have it. If you like to come and take a snack along o' me, you'm heartily welcome to, but if you don't, you must excuse me for not stopping to answer your questions."

And Mr. Lane made for the outside of the station.

"I don't know that I can leave my post," returned Clem anxiously, and still keeping by the farmer's side. "But won't you wait a moment while I go and see if I can get away for half-an-hour. I won't keep you over a couple of minutes, and I *must* hear what's going on in Treverdale."

CHAPTER XVI.

EXPLANATIONS AND REVELATIONS.

"I SHAN'T wait more than a couple o' minutes, Freer," Mr. Lane called as Clem was disappearing. And he meant what he said; for not only was he hungry, but he was beginning to suspect that there was something wrong—some misunderstanding—between Clem and the folks at Treverdale; and he shrank from imparting to the former such news as that he possessed. It might be very unwelcome news, he reflected, in which case his task would be the reverse of pleasant. The bearer of ill-tidings is seldom rewarded with a superfluity of gratitude, as he knew, and he was just contemplating getting out of his difficulties by flight, when Clem came hurrying back.

"My mates have made matters easy for me," he said, "I can have half-an hour or so."

"Waal and good," responded Mr. Lane, resigning himself to the inevitable. "Come along—I'm right down famished. There's a comfortable tavern about ten minutes' walk from here, where I always put up when I come to town. The landlady's a Devonshire woman, and so we may reckon on a good dinner and a quiet place to eat it in. 'Tisn't much of a place to look at, but 'tis all right once you'm inside—as you'll see."

And this assertion was amply verified; for the landlady, having exchanged some friendly compliments with the farmer, ushered him with his companion into an unoccupied room, and sent them in a collation worthy of a big hotel.

"Now, my lad, fall to," cried Mr. Lane, acting up to his own counsel. "Waat 'ull you have? This is a rare fine bit o' beef, I can tell you."

"I only want to hear the Treverdale news, farmer," said Clem, "I had my dinner two hours ago, and I haven't got my appetite back yet."

"Stuff an' nonsense!—you must take a bit of something, if only for company's sake. You don't look as if you'd had a good dinner for days. Have you been ill?" observing the young fellow's altered looks, for the first time.

"Why, yes," returned Clem, looking at his host, with some surprise, as he seated himself at the table. "I met with an accident last November, you know, and had to lay up in hospital for over six weeks. Didn't you hear about it?"

"Laid up for six weeks by an accident!" exclaimed Mr. Lane, suspending operations on his plate of beef, to turn a puzzled gaze on his companion. "No, I haven't heard aught about it. Six weeks, eh? E'm," going on with his dinner and muttering his thoughts to himself, "that accounts for the milk in the cocoa-nut, I expect. But," again addressing Clem, "how came you to meet with an accident, my lad?"

"Well, it was this way," began Clem, and, with as much brevity as possible, he gave the farmer an account of his mishap, and its consequences, adding, as he brought his narrative to a close, "But surely you have heard all this before, farmer? Such news gen'rally gets spread about a country place, fast enough."

"Aye, so it does, an' so 'twould, if you'd taken the trouble to write it—no doubt o' tha't, Clem Freer!"

"But I did write it," declared Clem, "I wrote as soon as I was able to hold a pen."

"Oh, come now, don't tell me tha't, young man! And if you did write, who was it to?"

"Why, who should it be to but to my—to Jenny Caerden?"

"Then you did write to her?"

"To be sure I did!"

"And you told her about your accident and all the rest of it?"

"Yes—all there was to tell."

"Waal, this is the first I have heard o' it, and I'm right down puzzled. The fact is, Freer, us folks, down to home, ha' been thinking you have been acting like a—like a scoundrel by the poor little maid, Jenny Caerden."

"'Tis small matter to me what other folks think, so as she knows better—as of course she does. And *she* wouldn't think a hard thought of me, in any case, my gentle little girl. No. But she hasn't written to me for a long time past. I know she hates writing letters, but it wouldn't be *that* that keeps her from sending me a line, and—and," growing pale and excited, "I have been full o' fear, the last day or so, lest she, too, should have been ill. But she hasn't, has she? She's all right?—now, at any rate. For God's sake, don't keep me in suspense, farmer. You look as if there was something wrong!—is my Jenny ill?"

"No, no, not she. Daavil a bit! She's all right, so far as sickness goes, though there must be an ugly crank in the case, somewhere, for the maid herself has put it about that she hasn't heard from you for months and months."

"But she *has* heard, I tell you," cried Clem, looking bewildered. "She must have heard. I wrote her a long account of my illness and how it came about—two or three sheets full—as soon as I was out of hospital, and when I didn't get an answer I wrote again—some three weeks later on."

"And you didn't get any reply to either letter?"

"No, not a word; and—But stay," pausing, as if struck by a new idea, and passing his hand perplexedly through and through his hair. "I suppose—I suppose that imp did post the letters all right?"

"Imp? What imp? Who are you talking of?" asked Mr. Lane.

"Why the boy that posted—or maybe, didn't post—the two letters telling of my accident," returned Clem. "I ought to have done it myself, but they were both written pretty late in the day—the first, when I'd just left the hospital and wasn't fit for any exertion, and the next, when I was nearly done up by a hard day's work; and I gave them both to my landlady's son, to post. He's an ill-disposed young cub, I know, yet I thought he might be trusted to do a job like that. But I'm beginning to fancy—nay, I almost hope—he played some precious trick with the letters, instead of posting them."

"Belike he did, if he's the sort you say, and in that case Jenny Caerden never got them. I should be as glad as you to think so, for she wouldn't be so much to blame then."

"Blame?—my Jenny? No, no, dear heart, *she's* not to blame! 'Tis I that's in fault—I shouldn't have trusted my work to any hand but my own—I should have done it myself. But I must get at the truth of the matter—I will wring it out of Master Sam Reader, or I'll wring his impish neck! But I sent another letter to my poor little maid yesterday—I posted it with my own hand, this time—and she would have got it this morning. Yes; she will understand everything by now, for I told her the same news all over again, and I shall get a long, loving answer from her, maybe to-morrow, or at furthest, next day, and then——"

"Now, now, stop a bit, Freer. Don't rattle on so fast, my lad—it hurts me to hear you. The fact is, I don't think you will get an answer to-morrow. No; nor the next day, an' the next, either!"

"But why not, farmer?"

"Waal, I scarce know how to tell you; but I don't think you will, an' that's the truth."

"You don't think my promised wife will answer my letter, Farmer Lane? Then why, I ask?" And Clem brought his fist down on the table, so energetically, that every article on it jumped and jangled.

"Now, you keep yourself cool, young man, or I be dorned if you 'ull get another ward out o' me," cried Mr. Lane, startled out of his wits, by the other's sudden vehemence.

"Answer my question," commanded Clem, with flashing eyes and set teeth.

"Waal an' good, Clem Freer. If you will have it, you shall, an' I hope you 'ull like it, that's all! Had you got any cause to think, when you left Treverdale, that your 'promised wife' was like to chuck you up for someone else?"

"N—o. Go on."

"Or that there was someone else after her?"

"I heard something about Ashdown, but I didn't believe it," said Clem, unconsciously drumming his fingers on the table, and keeping his eyes steadily fixed on the farmer's face. "I had little fear of him at the time, but maybe he's been trying to get my Jenny from me? He had best look to himself, if he has!"

"Ashdown? Stuff an' nonsense, man!—Ashdown's going to be tied up to that sober little thing, Mary Seaton, next June. Can't you think o' anyone else—Tom Penrose, for instance?"

"W—hat!" shouted Clem, after a moment's blank silence, and springing to his feet. "Tom Penrose, the limping miller? My Jenny give a thought or a glance to such as he! Oh, come, now," with a laugh that had a terrible ring of anguish in it, "that's too good a joke, farmer. 'Tisn't fair to make sport of my anxiety!"

"I'm not making sport of anything, Freer. I wish I was, since you take what I tell you so much to heart."

"But you don't mean to say that there's any—any real flirting going on between Penrose and my Jenny?" asked Clem breathlessly. "Faugh!—'tisn't likely. No, 'tisn't likely. Come, tell me it isn't true, farmer. Say it isn't true—just for old times' sake?"

"Waal, 'tisn't true that there's any flirting, my lad, for folks don't flirt when they mean business. An' thaat's what Tom Penrose an' Jenny Caerden mean; for they were called, in St. Marg'ret's Church, on Sunday, for the third an' last time!"

Clutching the back of his chair to save himself from falling, Clem uttered a terrible exclamation as the farmer made his crushing announcement. Then, like one who had just been indulging in the "delights" of an over-heavy drinking bout, he staggered to the side of the room and leant his back against the wainscot—tearing at his neck-covering and baring his throat

and chest, as if for air or as if he were being strangled, panting meanwhile as though he had been running for his life.

"Lord, man, what the plague's come to you, now?" cried Mr. Lane, hastily rising to his feet. "Who'd ha' thought o' your taking my bit o' news this way? I wish I had been at Jericho before I'd told it to you! Here, come an' sit down again." And dragging the young fellow back to his chair, he pushed him into it and forced a few drops of brandy between his ashen lips. "Come, now, pull yourself together," he went on, adding, as Clem, burying his head in his arms on the table, gave utterance to a few uncontrollable sobs. "There, there, don't make a fule o' yourself, lad. There ain't a woman alive—no, an' there never will be—that's worth a man's grieving after. Come, cheer up. There's quite as good fish in the sea as ever came out o' it, 'tis said, and this little jade, Jenny Caerden, isn't worthy o' a single snap o' your finger an' thumb, let alone a tear!"

"Be she what she may—false, faithless, lying—she was all the world to me!" cried Clem, again starting to his feet and beginning to pace up and down. "Yes; she was all the world to me, and none other can ever take her place. You have broken my heart with your news, farmer, and the world's grown empty and cold. For you wouldn't tell me a lie, would you?—'tis surely true, what you say?"

"Ay, 'tis true enough, Clem Freer!"

"And they—those two—you said they were called in church on Sunday, for the last time, didn't you?"

"I did. I heard the banns wi' my own ears."

"There couldn't be any mistake, I suppose?—you are sure 'twas—'twas Jenny?"

"Sure an' certain!"

"And when—when—oh, you know what I mean, farmer—when——?"

"When are they going to get married, d'you mean? Waal, let me see now, was it to-day or to-morrow? Why, 'tis to-morrow—Thursday, to be sure. But do you take it easy, Freer. What's the good o' letting it upset you?"

"Ay, what's the good?" echoed Clem, in low, hoarse tones, and showing no further sign of the despair that was wringing his heart. "What's the good, indeed! And 'tis to-morrow, you say?—Jenny Caerden's to be married to-morrow?"

"That's true, my lad—she an' Tom Penrose 'ull be tied together, hard an' fast enough, this time to-morrow!"

"Will they?" said Clem, with a low, fierce laugh, as he hastily rearranged his disordered neck-gear. "We shall see. Maybe, I shall have something to say about that!" And catching up his cap, he dashed out of the house before Farmer Lane could guess his intention or utter a word of protest.

Speeding along the crowded streets—for men were hurrying home from offices and warehouses—Clem made his way to his lodgings. He could hear Mrs. Reader at her mangle, but fearing to be detained, he gave her no intimation of his presence, but running quickly up-stairs, rapidly changed his porter's garb for the grey suit that had been his best when he came to London. Then, taking from its hiding-place the little store of money he had saved since he had been in regular work, he laid a few shillings on the mantel-shelf in discharge of his liabilities to his landlady, and hurrying out again, into the keen, evening air, he betook himself back to Paddington Station.

Walking at his best pace, it was yet getting late for his purpose when he arrived at his destination, but having secured a ticket and evaded the surprised questioning of his daily companions, he sprang into a third-class carriage of the nine o'clock train, just as it was beginning to steam out of the station on its long night journey to Truro.

(To be continued.)

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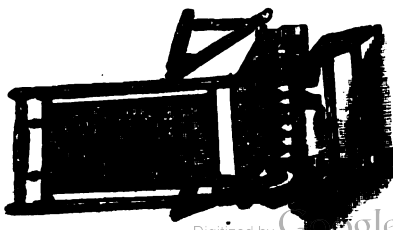
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FROM THE MAN UNDER WATER.

You don't mind taking a lesson, do you? provided it is short and doesn't oblige you to study hard? "No." We thought not. We must always be learners, you know; never get too old or too wise for that. Well then, here it is. Perhaps you have seen one of these professional divers go down into the water to inspect a sunken wreck or to search for something that has dropped in. He gets inside of his ugly-looking case, or water-proof armour, claps on his head-piece and down he goes; out of sight and hearing in half a minute—down among the ruck and mud at the bottom. Of course they have to keep pumping air down to him through the hose or he would suffocate right out of hand. But when he wants more air, or less, or wants to be hauled up, how is he to let the men on the dock or in the boat know? You answer me like the click of a gun lock: "*He will signal with the cord he holds in his hand.*" Right. Now, for the application. You will see what we mean before we get the words written; some scholars are so bright and quick. Here is a letter from Mr. George Bullock, of Manor Farm, South Stoke, Oxon, in which he says that he was ill more or less for fifteen years. "I had," he says, "a bad, sour taste in the mouth, a rough and thickly-coated tongue, poor appetite, and pain in the chest and between the shoulder blades after eating. I was also much troubled with nausea and windy spasms. I had a *nasty hacking cough*, and in a morning I spat up quantities of thick phlegm. My breathing was very hard and difficult. On and off I consulted doctor after doctor, but their medicines did me no good, and so I continued to suffer year after year. My wife and other relatives thought I was in a consumption and must soon die of that fatal disease." Mr. Bullock, who is a large farmer, well known and highly respected throughout his district, is a well man now, but before we speak of that part of his case we will hear a word from Mr. Moses Copley, of Ledsham, Yorkshire, who will help to illustrate our lesson. "For twenty years," says Mr. Copley—writing under date of February 9th, 1893—"I suffered from a *hacking cough* which every one said would take me to the grave, as nothing that I used to cure it did any good." In other respects Mr. Copley's illness was just the same as Mr. Bullock's. He could eat little, had pain and weight at the chest and sides, was tormented with heartburn and was often sick—throwing up a sour fluid. As time went on he got weak and feeble—just as we should expect. How could it have been otherwise? If a man can't eat and digest his food his strength will all die out of him, of course. You can't keep on getting water out of your well if none ever runs in. A boy who hasn't yet learned his letters can see that. But here is the question we must have an answer to: *What makes a person cough?* "He can't help it," you would say. Beg pardon, but while that is true it is not an answer. Wait a moment now. Let us get back to our man under the water, our diver, you know. What makes him pull the cord? You can answer that as easily as you pull on your old shoes. The diver pulls his cord to let the men above him know what condition he is in down there and what he wants done. Precisely. Now, all the organs inside of your body—the stomach, bowels, lungs, liver, &c., are like men under the water. When anything ails them they must let you know somehow, so as to get help. The cords they pull we call pains, and symptoms of disease. They are *not diseases* though—remember that! We have the idea now, all pat and plain. The *cough* which worried our two friends was the pulling of a cord to let them, or their doctors, know they were suffering from indigestion and dyspepsia. It was the stomach, not the lungs, that was in trouble. The other symptoms showed that. *Consumptives commonly have good appetites, and no pain.* Do you see? Well, both Mr. Bullock and Mr. Copley finally took Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup and soon got rid of the indigestion and dyspepsia and everything that belonged to it, cough and all. The stomach was all right and sent up no more signals. Unlike the diver the stomach never wants to be pulled up. Here ends the lesson.

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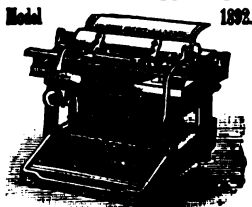
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